

AN ADVENTURE IN SELF-EXPRESSION

(Second Edition)

A. K. BROHI

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If ambition had been the sole determinant or decisive factor in my life, I would have assuredly dedicated this book to Mr. & Mrs. I. I. KAZI, my Spiritual Parents, but if I have decided to deny myself the pleasure of doing so, it is for the reason that, in my opinion, the book is not worthy of being associated with their noble names.

Only the Spirit, if it breathe upon the clay, can create Man.

—ANTOINE DE SAINT EXUPERY.

PREFACE

The present collection of essays and addresses contains some of the 'thoughts' which I have, off and on, now for over a dozen of years, been voicing on diverse subjects, just for the sake of expressing *myself*. These essays and addresses merely reflect an ever-changing attitude of a mind that has been growing, Heaven knows, in what direction. To that extent they are undoubtedly desultory and disconnected. For me to claim any originality about the ideas I have expressed therein would be worse than being pretentious; to say that any of them represents truth in the absolute sense of that term, would be the very height of folly. Nor again do I, by any means, claim any finality, for the views that have been set forth in the pages that follow. I am myself in the making and I propose to live by my ideas and not die of them. A man who can claim that he has discovered the Absolute Truth may as well say that he has ceased to grow—and is not ceasing to grow the same thing as ceasing to be?

In the way I look upon some of these essays and addresses from this much distance of time, I feel like disowning three-quarters of what I have said in them—and fain would I do so if only I were convinced that I was entitled to do so.

A word of explanation is, however, necessary in order to indicate why I think I have no *right* to alter anything in all that I have said.

At various stages of our biological or psychological

evolution, life in us assumes different forms: in some sense, we ourselves become different. This is so, essentially because at various stages of our earthly career, we embody different impulses and if we talk about the continuity of our life at all, it is only because all the phases of our inner development are viewed by us as leaving some manner of stamp upon the phases that succeed them. As between the childhood and the adolescence, for instance, there is a vast gulf that separates the two: the ideas in which we took pride in our early life, we are not prepared even so much as to own when we grow slightly older. This is so, precisely because change is the stuff out of which our earthly consciousness is made and that is also the reason why we are not entitled to tamper with the ideas that have been voiced at one time by the 'selves' that have ceased to be. We must learn to view all these ideas as being inviolable—to tamper with them is to infringe the copy-rights of our remote ancestral selves.

Every expression, provided it is sincere and accurate, is true in relation to the "self" it expresses. Only that expression which proceeds from the very depths of our being can bring out the essential characteristics of our 'self'. No matter what I may be engaged in talking about, whether about the distant stars or my toothache, in reality, I am, all the time, talking only about myself: in fact, according to Thomas Traherne, enjoyment of the external world is not possible until and unless I can feel it as an integral part of my being. And so he says—"You never enjoy the World aright till the sea itself floweth in your veins, till you are clothed with heavens and crowned with the stars, and perceive yourself to be the sole heir of the whole world and more than so because men are in it who are, every one, sole heirs as well as you. Till you can sing and rejoice and

delight in God, as misers do in gold, and Kings in sceptres, you never enjoy the world". The illusion of externality of objects arises only because the 'self' in us has not, as yet, become one with Nature and has not thus been able to absorb the various objects it apprehends into its fathomless deeps. Montaigne, for instance, views every Essay of his, no matter about what subject-matter it be, in this fashion : in each, he says, "It is myself that I portray". It is in this sense that all higher art is the autobiography of the spirit. The more profound the artistic impulse is, the more effective does its expression become, in the sense, that it comes to be appreciated universally. It is only the pseudo-art which captures the attention of the mere specialists. All great art can be enjoyed by each one of us precisely because its deliverances transcend the subjective limitations of the artist's personality. It is true that the bounds of what is ordinarily understood as our "subjectivity" cannot be absolutely transcended: ultimately everything we see, think, feel or even cognize is coloured by the native traits of our personality. The only objectivity that can conceivably be attained by us is the result of our complete absorption in the *object* of our attention: we can, in fact, become so much absorbed that the object ceases to occupy a point *external* to our being—to use an unavoidable 'spatial' metaphor. Nature, and the man who comprehends that Nature, are aspects of a single primordial and indivisible whole and if we at all view them as occupying subject-and-object relationship it is only because our knowledge of their reality, to begin with, is possible only in that way. But the more we descend deep into ourselves, the more do we come in contact with a wider field of objects and events in Nature. However paradoxical it may sound, the process of

interiorization, if carried sufficiently forward, does in fact lead us to the comprehension of Nature's mysteries. A stage then comes in our experience when we ourselves appear, in some sense, as external to ourselves: in a state, where we are both conscious and aware of being conscious. Thus it is that the contemplation of the external objects ultimately helps us to accelerate the inward movement of our life. The Quran also says that you will find God in the *Signs* of Nature and in yourself. These observations help us to appreciate the claim of Tennyson contained in those beautiful lines of his poem: "Flower in the Crannied Wall"—

"Flower in the crannied wall
I pluck you out of the crannies
I hold you here root and all, in my hand
Little flower—but if I could understand you
What you are, root and all, and all in all
I should know what God and man is."

The comprehension of the flower, *i.e.*, its constitution, its genesis, and its beauty, would necessarily enable us to understand God and Man, because they are all involved in its being. The universal everywhere is reflected only in the particular.

The term "self-expression" thus signifies, in my way of thought, all that creative activity which brings about the *marriage* between the subject and object, between Man and Nature. Even cognition is creation. In man's soul does Nature fulfil herself. Nature has been provided with a mirror in the heart of Man in which she can look at herself—and when that happens she *appears* far more beautiful than she, in fact, is. That this is no idle speculative assertion is proved by the fact that the Physical World is, even according to the physicist, devoid of secondary qualities, that is qualities

like the colour, odour, sound, etc. In fact, these qualities do not enter into our own perception of material substantiality, but are 'supplied' by the human mind to Nature. Coleridge states this truth poetically when he says,—

> "O Lady ! we receive but what we give,
> And in our life alone does Nature live :
> Ours is her wedding-garment, ours her shroud !
> And would we aught behold, of higher worth
> Than that inanimate cold world, allowed
> To the poor loveless, ever-anxious crowd,
> Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth
> A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud
> Enveloping the earth—
> And from the soul itself must there be sent
> A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,
> Of all sweet sounds the life and element."

Thus man recreates the data supplied by sense perception in his own image and by his imagination transforms the world. A great poet transforms the familiar world and the record that he leaves of what he has done to heighten the beauty of the world in turn helps us to perceive more and more of the significance of creation. "He," says Mr. Aldous Huxley, "opens our eyes for us, and we follow in a kind of gold rush. The whole world seems all at once to glitter with the nuggets which he first taught us to see. What was empty of significance becomes, after his passage, suddenly full—and full of *his* significance. Nature, as Wilde insists in one of the best of his essays, is always imitating art, is perpetually creating men and things in art's image. How imperfectly did mountains exist before Wordsworth! How dim, before Constable, was English pastoral landscape! Yes, and how dim, for that matter, before the

epoch-making discoveries of Falstaff and the Wife of Bath, were even English men and women!"

The physical is the symbol of the spiritual, at any rate for those who mean to travel on the way of Truth. It serves as a bridge between the 'here' and the 'here-beyond'. To the eye of the wise it presents itself as a language of the Divine Power; for the selfish and the impure ego, however, it acts as "iron-curtain"—as though it had been 'designed to hide the Truth from the gaze of the vulgar.' Nature is thus, in effect, merely a reaction of our own being: by altering or transforming our being we can establish proper relationship between ourselves and the world of creation.

The moral of foregoing observations is to show that all that goes by the name of "self-expression" is not something which is entirely subjective. The 'self' in us has to resort to the comprehension of the *object* before it can express itself. No artist can bring out, in the world of manifestation, his deepest intuition unless he exploits some medium of expression : the painter exploits the colours and the canvas, the musician the sound, the dancer his bodily movements. Just as no meaning can be communicated except by exploiting some form of visible expression like the human language or a bodily gesture, so also our personality, our being, our self, has to resort to some external means for its manifestation. Self-expression thus necessarily involves loyalty to the objective order, comprehension of its laws and the ability to manipulate its material in the service of the spirit. This position has been succinctly set-forth by John MacMurray in the words that follow :—

"Self-expression is only possible through the object. This is due to the objectivity of the personal. Our personality is our objectivity. Our reality is a going out of

ourselves to a reality beyond us and independent of us. Shut me up within the limits of my own organism, rob me of my capacity to pass beyond the limitations of my subjectivity, to enter into and enjoy that which is not me—then I become a mere animal, conscious not of things but merely of the excitements and images which they stimulate in me. The self is personal; and the expression of the self is personal. Self-expression is the expression of that capacity to enter into the life of the other and to be absorbed in it. It is because the artist loses himself in the reality of that which he describes or depicts or reveals, because of his individual self-effacement, that his work is a spontaneous expression of himself. That is one meaning of the penetrating saying of Jesus : "He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall keep it unto life eternal." Personal spontaneity is always objective, always in terms of the independent reality of an object which absorbs us. There is no other self-expression possible. If we block the avenues of the outpouring of self, if we withdraw from the reality of the world, if we allow our actions to be subjectively determined by mere instincts and habits, following our inclinations, we do not express ourselves, we frustrate our own self-expression, surrender our freedom and suffocate all creative spontaneity. The artist does not act by impulse, still less by the compulsion of rules, but by the nature of the reality which he apprehends. By doing this he becomes free and his action becomes a self-expression. In no other way can self-expression be achieved."

So much then about the meaning of term 'Self-Expression' appearing in the title of this Book. Now a word about the considerations that have prompted me to publish this book.

I have never written nor ever spoken with a view to teaching anything to any one. I realize that I am too small a man to claim the privilege of either informing or instructing my readers : mine is, I thank God, a humble role. All my life I have felt myself to be a tool in the service of the creative impulse in me. And I know from experience that if I am only loyal to that impulse, it is bound to influence and in a measure transform, all those who are willing to listen to its deliverance in me. If there be a mind that is willing to listen even to the voice of one so humble and as uniformed as myself, I have not the least doubt that, in some mysterious way, it might be transformed into becoming a serviceable means for the communication of some spiritual message to this world. This influence which is at work wherever 'creative impulse' finds an adequate manifestation in us is the "hidden law" with reference to which is to be explained the aesthetic appeal and liberating influence of all great art. This influence works directly ; much in the manner in which, the sun-shine influences the growth of plants. In some sense, effectualness of this influence is independent of even the limitations of author's mind : so that it is ever so true that a reader or a listener, provided he defines his attitude properly to the written and spoken work, is likely to get more out of its author's expression than was put into it by the author himself. No wonder that, not infrequently, disciples excell their spiritual preceptors and carry on the torch of light much further than the vantage point at which they receive it. . . .

I believe that the highest attainment of which anyone of us, here below, is capable is to awaken the slumbering being that each one of us is harbouring within him. The existence of this metaphysical being in us may be compared to

a floating ice-berg : only a fraction of it is preceptible to our consciousness and the rest of it is hidden in a thick foggy blanket of instinctive life. The process of "awakening" consists in a shift of emphasis from the lower to the higher being : as it were, in lifting the ice-berg out of its native habitat by steadily detaching it from its moorings, The attainment of this objective is recommended by all Higher Mysticism and most of the religions emphasise the value of attaining this goal here on earth. This awakening, if it does not come here at all, would take long in over-taking us after we have discarded our mortal coil : those who are blind *here* will be blind *there* too !

There is no royal road to achieving this, what I call, 'self-awakening'. Each one of us has a certain inward disposition which qualifies him, in accordance with the peculiarities of his life's style, to resort to any one of the several well known means for the attainment of this objective. That is why the earlier teachers of mankind emphasised the importance of awaiting the advent of a spiritual guide in the life of a disciple, a guide who might prescribe just the one particular technique which is appropriate for him. The esoteric wisdom of the ancients was based on the belief that the moment a disciple was inwardly ripe to receive the enlightenment, the guide would somehow turn up of his own accord and point out the way.

With the liberation of the intellect in man, however, the process of 'self-awakening' has become somewhat difficult and instead of reliance being placed on an external guide we have now to fall back upon our own inner resources. No new prophet or Messiah will ever come ; intellect which had destroyed the unity of life is also capable of recreating it, provided the level of life itself could be

changed and the flow of its energies given a new direction. My own thinking and some experiences I have had convince me that this can be achieved if only one's energy could, through the culture of the powers of concentration, be directed towards the deepening of one's consciousness. Of this, I have spoken at some length in some of the essays that follow and all I need point out in this connection at this stage is, that we must learn to practise the art of securing "inner collectedness" by integrating life's diverse impulses under the sovereign power of our "self". In the way I have myself practised this art, I believe that a right beginning towards it is to acquire and maintain a rigid control over oneself: of course, a physiological control is an indispensible prelude to acquiring a proper control of physical powers. Whenever I am in the midst or in the grip of an over-powering joy or a paralysing sorrow I never let myself disappear from my own gaze and whenever any lapses occur, as when, to use a metaphor, I am thrown off the track, I attempt to switch back to the previous position and take possession of my being. By a continuous practice of this habit of living consciously I have been able to awaken some inner organs with which I can see more into things than is granted to those who inhabit continually a superficial layer of their consciousness....

Further, it should be remembered that the 'symbol' of awakening is not the *eye* alone but it is also the *light*: and although it is true that unless you open the eye you cannot see the light, it is equally true that unless there is light the mere opening of the eye can have no meaning. The two must converge to a focal point before the world of Truth can be discovered. In this context, it is easy to understand the point of Platonic Teaching. Plato, it would be recalled,

compares the role which the highest idea (which according to him is the idea of the good) plays in the intelligible world to the role which sun plays in the physical world. Just as the physical sun is not only the cause of the growth of the plants but also a condition for their being perceived, so also in the Higher World, spiritual perception is rendered possible by (a) the effort of man to evolve on the one hand and (b) the grace of God that descends on him from above, on the other. God is Light of the Heavens and Earth and He not only fosters in the soul of man the desire to discard its present state of being for a higher one, but also it is He who provides the necessary means that make this ultimate re-birth atall possible. In the end, as even the mystics teach us, it is all a matter of the Grace of God ; He gives whom He likes. But it is also His command that man must play his part : for nothing belongs to man except his effort.

All these beliefs appear to have sunk in my soul before I became aware of them and in later years when I began to meditate on the words of the Quran I found a confirmation of my attitude to life in those remarkable verses of that Chapter of the Holy Book which is entitled "The Light". Here are the words (Chap. XXIV, vs. 35-38)—

"Allah is the light of the Heavens and the Earth; a likeness of His light is as a pillar on which is a lamp, the lamp is in a glass, (and) the glass is as it were a brightly shining star, lit from a blessed olive-tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil whereof almost gives light though fire touch it not—light upon light—Allah guides to His light whom He pleases, and Allah sets forth parables for men, and Allah is Cognizant of all things :

"In houses which Allah has permitted to be exalted and that His name may be remembered in them ; they

glorify Him therein in the mornings and the evenings,

"Men whom neither merchandise nor selling diverts from the rememberance of Allah and the keeping up of prayer and the giving of poor-rate ; they fear a day in which the hearts and the eyes shall turn about ;

"That Allah may give them the best reward of what they have done, and give them more out of His grace ; and Allah gives sustenance to whom He pleases without measure.

"And (as for) those who disbelieve, their deeds are like the mirage in a desert, which the thirsty man deems to be water ; until when he comes to it he finds it to be naught, and there he finds Allah, so He pays back to him his reckoning in full ; and Allah is quick in reckoning :

"Or like utter darkness in the deep sea : there covers it a wave above which is another wave, above which is a cloud, layers of utter darkness one above another ; when he holds out his hand, he is almost unable to see it ; and to whomsoever Allah does not give light, he has no light."

Do read and re-read this passage—and I am sure you will see the entire secret of man's relationship to his Maker, symbolically, but nevertheless very precisely and clearly, stated. Allah who is the "light of the Heavens and the Earth" alone can dispel darkness "and to whomsoever Allah does not give light, he has no light". This, as you will see, is also a form of awakening. Thanks to the Grace of God and to His Light, a man can wake up to the reality of a higher world. It is out of this conviction that all light comes from Him, that the following verses of Cardinal Newman have appeared to me to be so full of human pathos :—

"Lead kindly light, amid the encircling gloom
Lead thou me on

The night is dark, and I am far from home
 Lead thou me on
Keep thou my feet; I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step is enough for me.
I was not ever thus, nor prayed that thou
 shouldst lead me on;
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
 Lead thou me on
I loved the garish day, and, in spite of fears
 Pride ruled my will; remember not past years.
So long thy Power hath blest me sure it still
 Will lead me on
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
 The night is gone;
And with the morn those angel faces smite
 Which I have loved long since and lost a while."

I shall, while I am dealing with these thoughts, like to refer to a passage from P. D. Ouspensky's "The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution"—in an attempt to further clarify this concept of self-awaking. Here is that passage:—

"But the question is, *how* can a man awake?"

"The Gospal teaching demands awakening, but does not say how to awaken."

"But the psychological study of consciousness shows that only when a man realises that he is asleep, is it possible to say that he is on the way to awakening. He never can awaken without first realising his sleep."

"These two states, sleep and waking sleep, are the only two states of consciousness in which man lives. Besides them there are two states of consciousness possible for man, but they become accessible to a man only after a hard and prolonged struggle."

"These two higher states of consciousness are called 'self-consciousness' and 'objective consciousness.'"

"We generally think that we possess self-consciousness, that is, that we are conscious of ourselves, or in any case that we can be conscious of ourselves, at any moment we wish, but in truth 'self-consciousness' is a state which *we ascribe to ourselves without any right.* 'Objective consciousness' is a state about which we know nothing."

I would recommend to every serious student who means to grasp the grammar of Human Salvation to read carefully what this remarkable Russian philosopher has to say about man's present position in the scheme of his possible evolution and how a man is to commence 'work' upon himself in order to outgrow the present state of his being and thus be delivered into the world of 'objective truth'..

And now finally a word about the books and the thinkers that have influenced me. I have mentioned the names of the thinkers whose thoughts I have drawn upon or referred to while discussing some of the questions that form the subject-matter of this book. I have, in particular, been influenced considerably from amongst the recent writers by the books of Count Hermann Keyserling, P.D. Ouspensky and Dr. Robert Briffault. To all these thinkers I was introduced, some eighteen years ago by my teacher, benefactor and friend, Mr. I. I. Kazi, the present Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sind. Both Plato and Kant, of course, I have read over and over again, and the evidence of my devotion to the system of their thought would be met with on almost every page of this book. Goethe, Carlyle, Ruskin, Tolstoy, Emerson, Romain Rolland, Ghazali, Rumi, Rabindranath Tagore, Walter Lipmann, Miguel de Unamuno and Bergson have also

been my constant companions and their books neverfailing sources of inspiration and delight.

Of course, I have not had much time for books that have been written just to impress the reader with the learning and scholarship of their authors: unless I am mistaken, these are merely books about books and I have, I confess, no aptitude for acquiring what goes by the name of mere book learning. I take to reading with some solemn and serious purpose and such is the constitution of my mind that only those who are themselves enlightened and evolved can possibly have a place in my life. As for the quibblers, the nitwits, the mere 'learned' ones—well, I have had no time to waste. For me "pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge" is a sort of slogan which I do not understand. Quite frankly, I pursue knowledge for the sake of life, to enable myself to live well and to fulfil the rich possibilities of my life's hidden power. I believe that everything we know has a relevance either to some immediate practical end or if it has no such ostensible direct reference to our day to day needs, it has reference to our desire to grasp the meaning of this mysterious life of ours.

We must therefore learn to think with all our being and not allow the thinking activity to become a sort of superfluous, uninspiring and a mere specialised phenomenon of our life. "There are," says my favourite Spanish philosopher and sage, Miguel de Unamuno, "in fact, people who appear to think only with the brain, or with whatever may be the specific thinking organ; while others think with all the body and all the soul, with the blood, with the marrow of the bones, with the heart, with the lungs, with the belly, with the life. And the people who think only with the brain develop into definition-mongers; they become the

professionals of thought. And you know what a professional is? You know what a product of the differentiation of labour is?

"Take a professional boxer. He has learnt to hit with such economy of effort that, while concentrating all his strength in the blow, he only brings into play just those muscles that are required for the immediate and definite object of his action—to knock out his opponent. A blow given by a non-professional will not have so much immediate, objective efficiency; but it will more greatly vitalize the striker, causing him to bring into play almost the whole of his body. The one is the blow of a boxer, the other that of a man. And it is notorious that the Hercules of the circus, the athletes of the ring, are not, as a rule, healthy. They knock out their opponents, they lift enormous weights, but they die of phthisis or dyspepsia.

"If a philosopher is not a man, he is anything but a philosopher; he is above all a pedant, and a pedant is a caricature of a man. The cultivation of any branch of science—of chemistry, of physics, of geometry, of philology—may be a work of differentiated specialization, and even so only within very narrow limits and restrictions; but philosophy, like poetry, is a work of integration and synthesis, or else it is merely pseudo-philosophical erudition."

The 'pseudo-philosophical erudition' of which my friend Unamuno complains has verily come to contaminate a considerable bulk of the contemporary philosophical literature. But then, that is not the only tragedy of this so-called age of enlightenment. Where there is a complete poverty of the soul, a total disbelief in the sanctity of spiritual life, a definite distrust in the supremacy and effectualness of moral values, merely to complain that learning

has become synonymous with quibbling and has become practically indistinguishable from senseless theorising, after all, is not saying anything which is worth saying. .

In the end I should like to emphasise that, to begin with at any rate, these essays and addresses ought not to be judged with a critical eye: the effort should be the other way about, that is to say, the reader should not take seriously any single assertion but must, with a loving trust, surrender himself to all that is contained in this book. If he does that, several trains of thought will be set into motion in his being. He will have to live through a process of unconscious incubation before he could hope to discover himself on a different level of being. At the end of his adventure he will not get from this book so much as even one predominant idea to call his own but will, unless I am very much mistaken, come to regard everything he knows already, somewhat differently. No learning process is involved in the relationship which I insist ought to exist between the reader and this book. If he is incapable of formulating that relationship, he may as well throw this book away and not waste his time on it. .

Needless to say that some of the essays in this book are of special interest to the younger generation in the new country of Pakistan, a country which has the possibility of becoming the cradle of 'spiritual renaissance' for the Modern World.

A. K. BROHI

Karachi
24th Dec. 1954

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

It is gratifying that the first edition of this book should have been exhausted in three months in Pakistan alone. This may, to a considerable extent, be due not only to the favourable reviews that have appeared in the Press but may also, in part, be attributable to the character of Pakistan's intelligentsia which seems more inclined to serious philosophical literature. But, whatever the true explanation, I would like to express my gratitude to all those who have welcomed the publication of this book. The book is now being translated into Urdu and it is hoped that at no very distant date the translation will be made available to the Urdu reading public.

I should like to take this opportunity of saying a few words in reply to the criticism that has been made against my defence of the possible utility or validity of the religious outlook in the modern world. The most outstanding comment in this behalf that has been made is that I am an incorrigible believer in the reality of religious life and do not seem to see the contradiction which the maintenance of such a belief necessarily involves with the adoption of a scientific and philosophical attitude to life and its problems. It is also maintained that I have an exaggerated notion of what religion has done in Man's History or can do in the twentieth century to elevate the moral tone of Man's conduct or to help him to accomplish creditably his

earthly tasks and duties.

Religion, it is true, has fallen into disrepute these days and is frequently denounced in the name of something called Science or the Scientific Spirit. The criticism made against the book or rather against its author, for being "naively religious" is, therefore, easily understandable. If religion is in bad odour and religious history a gory record of atrocious persecutions and infamies, this is because, as an institution, it has been exploited by those who have had a vested interest in its continuance in a crude form and who have deliberately misinterpreted it for the purpose of advancing their own ends. Religion has undoubtedly, as Marx has observed, been used as an opiate by the priestly class down the ages to degrade the masses; whereas the true and supreme function of religion is the liberation of mankind. Religion, not infrequently, has been pressed into the service of reactionary and indefensible designs which have obstructed the very progress of mankind. The kindly humane spirit of religion has been perverted to secure, generally speaking, a narrow conformity with mere ritualistic and formalistic tenets. The original spoken or written word in which religious teaching came to be embodied has been mutilated by those who constituted themselves its preservers and custodians; and all this simply because it was found that unless the texts of the scriptures were suitably altered to serve their purposes they might not be successful in throwing dust into the eyes of those who flocked around them in search of light.

Pragmatically considered, to use the words of Macaulay, Religion serves as 'a last restraint on earthly power', and as 'a last solace of earthly misery'. The highest temporal authority who acknowledges no limits to his earthly

power, all the same hears within him the voice of the inner monitor constantly protesting against the reckless use of that power. Similarly, a man who has lost his all and has been driven into the deepest depths of despair and who, on looking around him, finds no helping hand, may yet feel comforted by the thought that if not here, elsewhere at least, he will be compensated. Do we not, in times of deep dejection, discover the healing influence of religious consolation?

This then is the functional or instrumental value of Religion. 'Being religious' in this sense is demanded by the logic of the "Human Situation." Commenting on this aspect of Religious life, Professor R. B. Perry, in his recent book *Realms of Value* says: "It is a good thing in a limited sense, to have *some* religious belief whether the belief is or is not true, and whether the interests in whose behalf it speaks are high or low. The believer is spared the pangs of indecision. The unbeliever envies the believer's comparative tranquillity, and says, "I wish I could believe", because he, the un-believer, is "troubled with doubt", and desires to escape that particular trouble. The believer escapes not only from the trouble of doubt, but from its Hamlet-like paralysis. His belief imparts to his life a certain consistency and momentum."

I do not propose to expatiate any further on this aspect of the religious problem. All I wish to emphasize is that all the *criticisms* that have been urged against religion are relevant only to the extent to which religious beliefs and practices have been abused and distorted.

Modern anthropological research shows that religion, broadly considered, springs from Man's reaction to his environment and is in fact a co-relate of his finitude. The savage mind reacts to its environment which it hardly

understands—and in that predicament emerge those rudimentary beginnings of thinking faculty which in its mature form becomes the power which has led mankind up to its present pinnacle of glory. Religion comes to primitive man's rescue and harmonises the mind of the savage by resolving for it the discord that he discovers between his wishes and the hostile environment. It satisfies the longing of the intellect to solve the problem of human existence and destiny by giving to mankind, according to the measure of their culture, a satisfactory answer as to the cause of the world and Man's relation to this cause. It is the perception of this role of religion that made Shelly to assert: "What is the cause of life? That is, how was it produced or what agencies distinct from life have acted or act upon life. All recorded generations of mankind have mainly busied themselves in inventing answers to this question and the result has been—Religion."

It has been claimed that Religion as an institution is out-of-date and that the scientific man ought to consider it a point of honour to conduct himself strictly in accordance with the experimentally established truth. A scientist, in the view he should take of the world and man's place in it, ought to respect the findings at which he arrives as a result of patient and laborious study of nature's mysteries.

As against this view it is necessary to point out that it is not permissible to confuse the *history of an institution or idea with the logic of its present development* or to whittle down its efficacy and relevance to life by refusing to see its real worth and significance in the context of Man's present situation. Rationality and religiosity are not incompatible attributes of the human mind. By his powers of thinking, a man has been able to achieve an increasing measure of

refinement in regard to those very primitive religious conceptions in terms of which his ancestors attempted to define their relationship to the universe. And this enlightened outlook is not inconsistent with the religious attitude to life.

The great law of the mind of the savage is that when it is confrontedwith an altered situation which presents to it a stimulus with which it is not familiar, it re-acts to it blindly and takes the stimulus to be due to some external *will* like its own. The ancient view of the cosmos is, therefore, bound to be anthropomorphic; and the whole universe is bound to be conceived as being ruled by some will or wills that are believed to be determining all these changing conditions. Primitive man, therefore, observing all these changing phenomena was led to believe in some power which was controlling them. He explained things with reference to that Power. If the change favourably affected his interest it was construed to be a reward in disguise. But if it affected him adversely it was ascribed to the wrath of the Deity whose displeasure had been incurred because of some evil action done. In order to appease the Divine wrath, a protracted programme of rites was, therefore, devised.

This explanation by causes that are remote, tending to provide either the good or bad, had to be abandoned as man began to breathe more freely. In due course, Man began to develop a more detached spirit of inquiry. He was encouraged to persist in such an attitude because he could, artificially and for himself, at any time he liked, produce results. Instead of explaining things in terms of the 'Will of God', as the ultimate cause, it now became possible to explain changes by the immediate

antecedents that conditioned them. And what is science if not a knowledge of proximate causes—resulting from investigations in the realm of Nature and Society and verified through experiment and observations? Science studies the actual; finds out the laws that regulate and control the external world. But for the knowledge of these laws the adventurer who undertakes to adjust himself to the environment cannot succeed. He must understand the processes of nature in order to be able to deal with them. Hence submission to these laws becomes a necessity. It is not within our power to alter them because the laws of nature are constant and inexorable.

When we talk of obeying the laws of nature we do not imply that they reflect a command of some superior being which has anyhow got to be obeyed; the concept of law as applied to the study of natural phenomena is not to be confused with the concept of law, as the command of some sovereign authority, *e.g.*, the law as it is understood in Jurisprudence. Laws of nature are nothing but mathematical formulae in terms of which processes of nature can be grasped and by resort to them its powers can be controlled. Sciences like physics, chemistry and biology, attempt to discover constancies in the ever-changing courses of nature. Our present ideal of scientific method as a dispassionate study of causes that condition changes in our environment has not emerged, as it were, from an 'Eternal Nowhere'; it has not fallen from the skies; nor is it just an accidental growth. It is a logical development from Man's primitive reaction to his environment. In fact, the evolution of scientific method has to a considerable extent been influenced by the exigencies of practical life. Man has always desired to control nature and to exploit its

powers and to press them in the service of his needs. That is why it has been said that the 'pure' science of to-day is a derivation from the 'practical' science of the past. Its origin otherwise could hardly be explained. If adaptation to environment secures survival, science merely enables us to know our environment and the laws it formulates are nothing but convenient shorthand expressions that enable us to predict in a given case what would happen if certain contingencies were to occur.

But all this knowledge of the laws has nothing to do with the interpretation of man's experience of his deepest intuitions; or the comprehension of the significance of *values*,—values which men do admittedly acknowledge and for the pursuit of which they are prepared to make all sacrifices. Science cannot tell us anything about that Totality of Man's environment which conditions his outlook on life and prompts him to behave in such a strange way in the sphere of moral life. Science is interested only in the comprehension of a partial aspect of reality and to this end it undertakes a systematic study of an artificially selected segment of Man's Total Environment. It does not profess to take into account the entirety of man's environment for the purpose of understanding some well-defined aspects of reality. Of the ultimate nature and signifieance of this total environment, science, having regard to its objectives, its methods and its subject-matter, is not able to tell us anything. And it is here that religion steps in. It enables man to evolve for himself, be it even so by an act of faith, that ultimate attitude which he is to have to the world in which he discovers himself. Religion is a hypothesis which interpretes what this Total Environment of man is, and it is by an appeal to this hypothesis that he is able to organise

his impressions, and secure consistency in the conduct of his life.

Even a thorough-going atheist, if he is logically consistent, has much the same foundation for his attitude to the Total Environment. He, no doubt, rejects the existence of a Benevolent Creator and denies that 'Man' has any right to postulate the existence of a Power beyond himself. But even such an atheist has to live by an *attitude* which must take him beyond the evidence which is available. He cannot say, for instance, that he has, in reaching that attitude, taken into ac-count *all* that there is to be considered—say, factors like the mechanism of Perception, the Nature of Reality and the Time-process in which changes are taking place in relation to that Reality. Even the ultimate attitude of an atheist thus partakes of the character of that very hypothesis which religious consciousness happens to accept as valid.

Religion, in the sense stressed here, is a universal institution. Even Communism of the Soviet type which is avowedly 'godless' is not anti-religious. "Critics of Communism", says R. B. Perry, "have declared over and over again that communism is a religion, in that it exalts the proletarian revolution above all other ends and holds that its success is guaranteed by the laws of nature and history. Whether one says that communism is atheistic, or that it has made a god of Economic Force, depends on whether one is thinking in terms of a particular religious belief or in terms of religion in general. The god which communism denies is a particular variety of god, such as the Christian god; the god which it affirms is another variety of the universal god; both gods answer the description of god as cosmic power viewed from the standpoint

of what men take to be their paramount good.

"It is clear that esoteric Buddhism as well as Marxian communism recognizes no god in the Christian sense. But Buddhism teaches that Nirvana is the supreme good, and that the constitution of things—the law of Karma and the ultimate illusoriness of existence—permits Nirvana to be attained. Buddhism is thus a religion in its conjoining of a hierarchy of value with a cosmology, and it can even be said to have its god, if by 'god' is meant the saving grace of man's total environment".

And thus it is that Religion equips man with those necessities of spiritual nature without which he would be unable to confront the tough world and to do the work to which he is appointed. It furnishes him with a philosophy of things, at a time, when, from imperfect knowledge, it would be impossible to understand them for himself: it gives a full and deep satisfaction to those longings and aspirations which in its absence find only an incomplete satisfaction in this world. In a word, it satisfies the higher necessities of man's Nature, and so leaves him free to cope with those enterprises and labours which confront him in his 'passage through the corridor of Terrestial Time.' In short, it gives to man a sense of security in this world.

I do not deny the validity of the counter-claim made by the scientists, namely, that the discovery of scientific laws gives to mankind a sense of security at least in that quarter, and that when science uncovers all that there is to be known, we will have a full and complete measure of security—in which case this function of religion will be fulfilled by science. According to them, it is conceivable that a time may arrive when religion will have outlived its utility. But the scientists in arguing thus forget that there is still

one thing which no knowledge of the laws of Nature, however completely discovered, will ever give—and that is the *assurance* that the great web of laws which make up the warp and woof of our world shall work upwards to higher and holier ends. 'For if all causality be mechanical and all being bodily', then there is no assurance that goodness dominates and pervades the world. In the absence of such an assurance, morality becomes a useless and vain adventure for a thing that is not there. What is there in the Law of Evolution that would have enabled us to predict that the bodily wranglings and brute sexual passions of apes would ever give rise to a higher order of being—say, the Love of a Dante? In short, what is there in the Law of Evolution to show that from fierce despotism should come forth liberty; out of slavery, freedom; out of selfishness, unselfishness; out of might, right; out of fear, reverence; out of lust, love; out of conflicts, self-interest—morality and virtue? Knowledge of the Laws of Nature will give us security so long as we obey them, but that such a knowledge will never give us an *assurance* for the future may be seen in the fact that although Laws of Nature teach us from what man has sprung, they cannot throw the least light on what kind of a being will emmerge out of Man; and unless this can be established, how can we say that man will become something nobler and higher or brutal and more mean? In a word, what security have we for the progress of the world?

This assurance will always be given to us by religion. This is so because, the cardinal principle which defines it says that the nature of things is grounded in goodness and that all the values for which Humanity as a whole is battling are somehow conserved. It is religion and not science which consoles us in the hour of our defeat, telling us that

though the ills of life are unavoidable, still the plan is right and beneficient, that all things work for good and that Time alone is needed for the triumph of the Right. This is the hazard of faith, this is the essence of the religious attitude.

Besides satisfying the heart by opening up that infinite horizon of hope, Religion gives basis and support, nay soul and reason, to all those great ideas of Right and Duty which otherwise have no deep root in the constitution of Man's Being. It tells us not only what is good and what is evil, but it gives us a balance with which to evaluate the degree of goodness, of moral worth. It gives glory and splendour to those high attributes, those heroic endeavours of the mind which otherwise tend to weigh down our spirit. Religion makes us feel at home in this universe which even if its laws are known might still be indifferent and hostile. It is Religion which gives to our soul the home sickness for a here beyond. How then can anything so far achieved by man not owe its source to the religious nature of man himself?

Lastly, it has been said that it is only the tender-minded who needs religion much in the manner in which a cripple needs crutches. Tough-minded people, it is said, do not need religion: they want to be independent of any servile dependence on the consolations which religion offers and the sense of security it fosters in the mind of its votaries.

As against this argument there cannot be a counter-argument. Once a belief is denounced as being incidental to a certain type of temperament, there is no logical method of refuting it. In the end, this philosophical outlook becomes indistinguishable from an ideological expression of the individuality of a given *mind*, or *self*. If that be so,

I think the title which distinguishes this book from others that deal with identical subject matter, claims no more for its contents than a recognition of the truth of this very observation.

A title to a book does for the reader what the address on the envelope does for the addressee of the letter. Both serve to establish precisely for *whom* in particular the Communication is meant ! Every book is relevant to only to a is given class of readers, And the present book is no exception.

Karachi A. K. Brohi.

June 1, 1955.

CONTENTS

Our little systems have their day ;
They have their day and cease to be :
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know ;
For knowledge is of things we see ;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell ;
That mind and soul, according well,
May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight,
We mock thee when we do not fear
But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Alfred Lord Tennyson

Pigs eat acorns, but neither consider the sun that gave them life, nor the influence of Heaven by which they were nourished, nor the very roots of the tree whence they came.

THOMAS TRAHERNE.

* * * *

Two things fill my consciousness with ever fresh and increasing wonder and awe the oftener and the more deeply my mind concerns itself with them: the starry heavens above me, and the moral law within me... The first begins at the place I occupy in external nature and extends the connexion in which I stand into infinite space, with its worlds on worlds and systems of systems, and beyond that into the limitless time of their periodic movements, their commencement and duration. The second begins in my unseen self, my personality, and places me in a world that has true infinity but which is perceptible only to the understanding, and with which I know myself to be connected not merely accidentally, as in the first case, but completely and inevitably.

KANT.

* * * *

Reason is like an officer when the King appears
The officer then loses his power and hides himself.
Reason is the shadow cast by God ; God is the sun.

JALALUDDIN RUMI.

MUSINGS UNDER THE STARRY SKY

I

Nights at Hyderabad are wonderful indeed! Never before, anywhere else have I felt, what I do here, when I sit under the starlit-sky. I have been to many places on the planet; been in the old as in the new world; in the northern as well as in the southern hemisphere; but the grandeur, magic and splendour of the starry sky I have felt, and felt decisively, only at Hyderabad. The sky seems to come down at night by thousands of miles and the stars look brighter and bigger than at any other place I have been.

Ever since the days of my childhood I have been fascinated by the mystery of the stars. I have felt a strange emotion whenever I have looked at these diamonds in the sky. In later years when I became familiar with the philosophy of Kant I was not altogether a stranger to the truth so aptly conveyed by him in that immortal saying of his: "Two things," he said, "have always filled me with wonder; the starry sky above and the moral law within." I would controvert only the latter part of the statement, namely "the moral law within"; not so much because I am not impressed with its reality, but because he classified the two together, the obvious and the mysterious, the visible and the invisible, in a single assertion. But, perhaps, even there he is right, he conceives '*man*' to be occupying a position at the meeting place of the two worlds: the outer and the inner—the limit of the former being the farthest of stars and the deliverance of the latter being found in the voice of conscience which issues forth from the profoundest depths of our being...

When quite a child, I recall having heard someone say that if one could look for forty nights continually at

the North Pole star, one would either become the wielder of temporal (*Amir*) or spiritual (*Faquir*) power. I also remember having attempted to see this steadfast star, for forty nights continually. I could not, however, succeed in keeping the vigil because some nights would be cloudy and, on others something would happen, and I would either be unable to see it or, again, would just forget about the very resolve to see it. Is that, then, the reason why I have become neither a *Faquir* nor an *Amir;* but alas! a halfway house between the two, or perhaps not even that?

But quite apart from the unsuccessful pursuit of these two apparently conflicting goals, I am sure I have, while contemplating the courses of the stars, experienced an inner transformation and felt an emotion which it is so hard to describe. Whenever I am most myself and pour my 'self' out of the usual moulds that mark its earthy boundaries, I escape; then I seem to touch a wider being and float away into regions whose frontiers it is difficult to determine. At Hyderabad, this feeling gets intensified; to-night, I wish to meditate upon the secret of this cosmic emotion, this bursting forth of the earthly shell whenever I glance at the grandeur and majesty of the vast interstellar spaces within whose womb move the countless stars we find in the Heavens above...

2

The words of the Quran come naturally home to my mind: in this mood, their meaning becomes so clear. I hear the Voice: "And He has made subservient to you (*wasakhar lakum*) the sun and moon, pursuing their courses and He has made subservient to you the night and the day" (Chap. XIV:33). What was once a riddle to me is no longer one now. Although the neighbours of mother-earth, the moon, the planets, the sun and the stars are pursuing their courses under the sway of some inexorable necessity, they are, in a sense, subservient to *man*. The *man* in me is the faculty to reason, the ability

to judge and to discover the truth of things. And to this faculty or power, verily, everything is liable to submit. Do I not know the movements of these heavenly bodies, their cosmic hurryings? Do I not know their distances from me as though I have surveyed them with a yardstick, and their weight as if I have weighed them in a balance? Do I not, thanks to man's capacity to think, know how to predict their movements and account for their formation as though I had been a witness to their creation from the First *dawn* of 'Becoming'? Thus can a man dive deep into the heart of things and feel the heart-beat of the whole of creation. Is it, therefore, not true that the world of creation is fated to be subservient to the spirit in *man*?

External necessity rules events; to the pre-ordained pattern of things everything is fated to conform: in that sense, "the sun and the moon pursue their courses" and are not amenable to the will of *man*. But when it comes to the process of comprehending the ground of their being, "that which He blew into the nostrils of Adam" helps us to rise to the occasion. It is only in that sense that man is free...

I, too, am bound: yes, bound, 'hand and foot', to fulfil the law of my being. But the law of my being is no other than the one of submitting to His Will, so that if I could consciously obey it, I would become free in the sense in which nothing is free in creation. The Empire of Fate relaxes its grip when the Son of Man consciously accepts the Law in obedience to which the World of Creation (*Khaliq*) lives, moves, and has its being in the Spirit (*Amr*).

The stars represent the extreme limit of my physical sight; whereas my legs cannot, my thought can—carry me to them. When this process goes into action I am no longer fettered by my earthly instrument of action—the body. In imagination I can be one with them. Have I not tracked the weary moon in its orbit, and have I not played, as would

a boy with his marbles, with the whole planetary juxtaposition of the Solar System? And I hear the cry of a "seeing eye" exclaiming that there are worlds beyond the stars. And I am not even sceptical about this bold assertion!

Here is a contrast between my earthly reach and the limitless flights of my real being. As an earth-bound creature, I cannot move myself from one place to another except by surrendering myself to the Law of Mechanical Necessity; but, as a partner in the spiritual process, I am free to spring with an infinite leap from one end of the Universe to the other...

The midnight hour: the moon creeps above the eastern horizon rather stealthily. But I am not taken unawares. I greet it with the look of a familiar friend. Its light soon throws a mantle of invisibility over the stars, and their number and luminosity diminish as our nearest terrestial neighbour creeps up into prominence. It is strange that light should put out light. In this case, it is not even true that greater light puts out the smaller light. The borrowed light of the moon eclipses the brilliant light of Betelgeuse. The reflecting mind, however, declares: "O! no, it is all an illusion. Nothing appears and disappears: everything is. Only you, a creature bound by space, are a victim of the Law of Perspective. Nearer objects appear bigger than they are—and the remotest stars appear small when in fact they are not. What is it that helps you to correct the false portrait of Reality? Does the sun ever set, or moon ever rise? O! no, it is our tiny little planet that keeps on rotating and goes on creating the illusion that everything else moves although it remains, relatively at least, fixed and unmoving."

The object of *man's* life is to correct the appearance, to see the truth of things by conceptual thought. Nobody has yet seen a sphere or a cube: what we see of them is a mere two-dimensional projection in our perceptual consciousness, and it is we who supply the third dimen-

sion; *i.e.* read something more into what the eye discloses; something that the eye cannot itself see. After all, as Plato says, it is not the eye that sees, it is I that see. And since what I see is not yielded to me by my eye but is something more—I proceed to fix my discovery by a symbol and give to it "a local habitation and a name".

Name? That reminds me again when I hear the Quran declare of some special *Gift* having been conferred on *man*—a power, a capacity which even the angels do not possess:

"And when your Lord said to the Angels I am going to place in the Earth one who *shall* rule (in it), they said what! Wilt Thou place in it such as shall make mischief and shed blood and we celebrate Thy praise to extrol Thy Holiness. He said, "Surely, I know what you do not know."

"And He gave Adam knowledge of things: then presented them to the angels; then He said tell me the names of those if you are right.

"They said, Glory to Thee! We have no knowledge but that which Thou hast taught us. Surely Thou art the Knowing and the Wise.

"He said, O! Adam inform them of their names. Then when he had informed them of their names, He said, did I not say to you that I surely know what is unseen in the Heavens and the Earth and that I know what you manifest and what you did hide."

That is then *man's* destiny here below: to observe and to reflect and realize, to *see* the World of Creation; to *grasp* the meaning of Nature and *anchor* himself in the World of the Spirit; to *observe* the events of the *External World* and to *follow* the movements of his *innermost soul*. It is around these two foci that our minds perennially revolve. To do this consciously is to live spiritually. Spirituality has no other meaning, no other content.

To have been granted, even in a limited measure, this capacity and opportunity of discovering the source of life

in the World of Creation is the greatest gift of the Maker to Man. It is thus in a mood of humility and gratitude that I continue to gaze at the splendour of the starry sky . . . And then, a new significance reveals itself to me. It is an experience analogous to understanding a language one did not know before. It is this experience which reveals to us the existence of an 'Inscrutable Absolute' behind the phenomenon and convinces us that "Life is a pair of scales where men must weigh imponderable things and things of clay."

But how do we proceed to 'weigh' the 'imponderable things' and the 'things of clay'? What is the standard weight in terms of which we can pronounce our judgment? Are the imponderable things commensurate with the things of clay? Is life commensurate with matter, freedom with necessity, or even the mental image in my mind with the external object which it professes to mirror in my consciousness? The whole history of human thought testifies to the difficulty of answering these questions. We are, as Milton says, lost in the "wandering mazes"—

> Others apart sat on a hill retired
>   In thoughts more elevated and reasoned high
> Of Providence, Fore-knowledge, Will and Fate—
>   Fixed fate, Free will, Fore-knowledge absolute—
> And found no end, in Wandering Mazes lost.

3

Reflection shows that the whole of creation is one and indivisible: each part of this stupendous organism is attuned to the life of the whole. There are inter-connected systems of divergent fields and spheres of the manifestations of the spirit. And a thinker who does not reflect upon the totality of all there is and see the relationship which each part bears, not only to another part, but to the whole, will not be able to appreciate the full significance of creation.

Take the case of human life in the context of this wider scheme of reference. Human life, although a late arrival in evolution, nevertheless, in itself and as such, reflects the highest manifestation of the primordial impulse which is at the back of creation itself. Within the range of human life itself we have varying degrees of the fulfilment of the potentialities of the spirit. A given human life may be more evolved than another; and, in fact, different degrees of the excellence of human life are in evidence when we begin to examine the inner content and worth of any human individual.

All the aspirations that animate our individual struggles, all the considerations which seem to control our actions, our thoughts, and our feelings—all these emerge out of the very profound depths of life itself. The roots of these aspirations and emotions are not embedded in the personal life of the individual at all. They can be traced to the deeper layers of the human personality and sometimes they seem to reach far backwards into the animal, the botanical, the chemical, and other levels of life's evolution.

All the decisions an individual takes appear to result from the interaction of several forces that are at work in him although this illusion is there, namely, that the man who takes the decision claims to be responsible for it and appears to think that the ground of the decision is comprehensively embedded in his being. But nevertheless, upon a more careful examination of the foundation of his belief, it would appear to him that several forces of which he was not aware, and of whose existence and strife he was not so much as conscious, have gone into the shaping of any decision which he might have taken.

Reflections such as these bring out clearly the one assertion that matters and that is: that man is 'miles and miles' deep and his being is rooted in some supra-personal and supra-individual Reality. It is thence that he draws all the inspiration and all the power, that give direction to his life. In the context of these ideas it is easy to grasp

the implication of the problem of Fate and Human Destiny.

As ordinarily understood, when a situation arises for a man in which he feels so overpowered and helpless as to practically count for nothing in shaping the course of events, he complains that all that has happened in spite of him was inevitable and was ordained by Fate, and was destined. Looking back at one's own life, one can recollect several instances in which events have happened, ties have been formed, which did not at the moment seem to suggest anything rational or significant. A fellow traveller, in a railway compartment, whose sole reason for talking to you is to ask the time, may so attract your attention to himself that a very deep and lasting friendship may be formed, a friendship which may come to alter the course of the life of both the individuals. At the time, when the first beginnings are made towards the prospect of a common living, both of them may not know the potentialities that lie dormant in what may have 'happened' that was primarily responsible for the formation of the initial ties. Looking back upon the events, both of them would say, "We were brought together by fate; and this was all destined". In the latter instance, it is merely the perception of the significance of the human relationship at a belated stage which is responsible for the use of the words "fate" and "destiny".

The 'coincidences' on which the plots of several novels and dramas have been built, accidents in terms whereof the courses of history have been accounted, appear to be not mere coincidences or accidents at all if you take a wide stretch and span of time and consider their significance in the light of subsequent events. A man may suffer a fall, may be afflicted with excruciating pain and sorrow, may be let down by his fellow men and may even justifiably feel that all this suffering was undeserved, and that it had come for no serious purpose but was just a mere incident in his life which may not have so much as 'happened'.

His helplessness may incline him to reflect and cogitate and look inwards. That suffering might then become a serviceable means for gaining experiences which may not have ordinarily fallen to the lot of a man who had not passed through this school of suffering. It may make a man introspective; it may impel him to seek the company of men who think and to spend his time in meditation and prayer. In course of time this disposition would create in him a new type of individuality, a new pattern of being which he may come to prize for its own sake. Looking back, even he may then think that the initial suffering was responsible for his subsequent development and may come to thank Providence for the sorrows that were sent down his way, and agree with the poet who said:

"Who never ate his bread in sorrow
Who never spent his midnight hours
Weeping and waiting for the morrow
He knows ye not, ye Heavenly Powers".

And this is so because,—

"There is sorrow, which is not sorrow
And miserable love which is not pain."

Now these typical experiences of individual life, these brief encounters with men and affairs, have more in them than is generally conceded; they illustrate the primordial unity of the individual life with the whole cosmos. They show that what 'happens' is not accidental: that there are no coincidences. Every event is designed to promote some serious purpose.

The ancient sages therefore believed that if a man unconditionally devoted himself to the pursuit of Truth and to the realisation of the essential unity of mankind, just at the time when he would need the help to get over the narrow prison walls of his individuality, some guide, some help in

some form or shape would come to his rescue. They used to believe in what might be called the law of spiritual causation. They taught that man is not alone in his strife and his struggle; that even at the eleventh hour God does come to man's rescue. Something always turns up; so much is this characteristic of life that when there is pain, when there is sorrow, when there is misery, when there is anguish in our soul, we are (if we are to believe the testimony of those who have mattered in History) being prepared to receive, in a proper perspective, the experience which is yet to come to us. That "inward preparedness" makes it possible for us sympathetically to understand and to appreciate what "happens" to us. If we had not been made to live through this phase and had not been so prepared, we would never have seen the significance of what was to "happen" to us.

Thus, in this God's world—and it is such a vast and wide world—on the bosom of this planet crawl thousands and millions of men and women. They live in organised communities; in clans, in tribes; each one of them is being squeezed into narrow, artificial and conventional moulds. But then notice how it is that some men and women break these bonds and barriers. When love is born, and mutual fellow feeling takes possession of the soul of man he ceases to belong to a fixed formation. He then escapes the grip of his 'Private World' and is delivered, even be it so momentarily, into the world of universal and objective Truth. All those fetters that bind him then disappear; and from the farthest ends of the earth souls that have been attuned to each other "even before time began" find one another out, unite, and live in communion with the infinite in everlasting peace.

Each man in his own 'self' perceives the ebb and flow of life's forces: happiness alternates with gloom; periods of prolonged inaction follow in the wake of manual work, toil and labour; without any ostensible cause, a string of strange moods seem to possess his soul; moods of despondency, of

despair, of unaccounted for happiness, and of hope. All these processes of our inner life, its inscrutable cycles and seasons, are calculated to act as so many multi-coloured apertures through which the soul of man is to gain perception of the essential unity of all inner and outer manifestations. How many times have we not read in autobiographies the expression "Just then, when all this was happening, as fate would have it, so and so met me or such and such a thing happened, and then the course of my life's career obtained a different direction." Thus, in effect, 'Fate' or 'Destiny', or 'Providence', or call it what you will, are terms that embody our recognition of one of the most significant facts of our experience: if analysed accurately this insight reveals the fundamental unity and purpose of all life. There is no such thing as 'separateness': and somehow, ultimately, even the very worst of afflictions does pave the way for something higher, for something nobler. It is true, we cannot conclusively demonstrate the truth of the assertion, that in all such cases one necessarily discovers a 'forward march' or that one notices an 'upward trend' in life's evolution. Many times events seem to happen which have the tendency in them of degrading and demoralising the person to whom they happen. But there is such a thing as Faith. It is on that basis that man can look forward with optimism to all the strange occurrences that touch his life. They make him look forward to the Future that is as yet unborn, with a great deal of courage and hope.

Many years ago, I asked a great Muslim scholar to tell me what he considered to be the typical Muslim attitude to life. And he answered with his characteristic brevity of expression: "A Muslim is one, who, in the very worst moments of his misfortune, sorrow and affliction, does not only say with his lips, but says believingly: "O God, that is the very best that could have happened to me." That is why the only justifiable attitude in hours of extreme despondency and dejection, in the words of the

Quran, is "to be patient and to pray"...

There is, in the soul of each one of us, a common under-current of life, a life that is to be called forth into action, into play, into supreme expression. At the touch of events which ostensibly appear to us to be devoid of all signi-ficence, the best in man is fated to flower forth. This hidden life, which is lying locked in the inner recesses of our being and is common to 'the child, the king and the sage', has to be released; and happy are those who find in the small measures of their conscious life an event happening, which brings this buried life up to the surface, to the fore-front. Then the life itself becomes different and this work-a-day world is transformed. Then, it is not the same sun, the same moon or the stars that one sees in the firma-ment; the familiar world puts on a new appearance and there begins to gleam even in this "muddy vesture of decay", "a light that there never was on sea or land." And just when you are about to give up the attempt to solve a problem you come across a book which proves itself to be of immense assistance to you: just when you are beginning to despair, someone extends a helping hand to you: just when you are beginning to feel you are lost, comes the deliverance. All this is designed by the scheme of things and you cannot any more explain this phenomenon than you can explain whence you came and what you are here for.

There is thus not so much a question of the conquering of Fate as the surrendering of oneself at the altar of the supreme will. All conquest is His—we His servants can only obey and surrender. That is the only road to salva-tion that is open to the 'believing mind'... There is Freedom only in Bondage.

4

"Know thyself" is the ancient-most command uttered by those sages and saints who were primarily concerned with the duty of helping us to understand the riddle of

life. But how can I know myself? *Where* is this self of mine and of *what* stuff is it made?

When I attempt introspectively to determine what my 'self' can be and throw the searchlight of my attention on my inner processes, all I stumble upon are my thoughts, feelings and sensations. These are really the only states of my being of which I am directly aware. But even on these elements I cannot concentrate for long, for I am soon taken away from them by images of all kinds that seem to succeed one another, without any of them, in any manner, being called into existence by my own effort of will. My attention seems then to be cheated of its original objective, and instead of plunging deeper into the sources of these inner states it is spirited away by a torrential flow of images whose course it can, but only to a very limited extent, control. Surely, neither these inner states of my being of which I am directly aware, nor the scroll of the images which concentration thereupon appears to unfold, can be conceived of as my 'self.' They have hardly any unity, or any fixity, by reason of which they could be viewed as a constellation clustering around any ascertainable nucleus so that they could be identified under a single name. The "I" to which these states are referable, as an object of cognition, is hardly distinguishable from any of the mental processes of which it seems to be the owner. For ought I know, it is just a name given to a feeling I have of the persistence of certain images of my bodily condition—it may, as Buddha taught, be just an illusion.

The more we *think* about the states of our being the more diluted do our experiences of these states become. Analyse as much as you will, you will find that these inner states of your being are blind alleys beyond which you cannot go. They are the barriers which it is difficult to surmount. Mere introspection thus leads us nowhere: if anything, it only succeeds in dividing the flow of our attention into at least two directions: it oscillates between the knower and the thing that is being perceived by him.

'Know Thyself' is thus a difficult, if not an impossible, command to obey. The command assumes that there is a self to be known. In fact all that introspection can help us to realize is that there is no such self ready-made as can be seen or known. The self has to be built, and to be created.

All human experience is referable to two factors—events and entities that exist independently of us, and of our will, and the *way* these affect our will when it wants to achieve certain results. The 'self' in me is a shorthand expression for indicating all that has been experienced. When I see the beauty of the heavens, or smell the fragrance of a flower, or hear the music of birds, or touch the tender hand of a friend, am I not experiencing things directly? And at the time when I am experiencing all this, does not my self incorporate in its wealth all those very elements which are supposed to be responsible for my experience? The 'objective' world when experienced is thus a part of my 'self'. If I could enlarge the scope of my experience I would be able to assimilate all that there is with the result that I would be able to build a 'monumental' self out of these varied experiences. After I have achieved all this, would come the next phase of knowing something about the activity which was engaged in acquiring mastery over these materials by making them an organic part of my life. Each one of us is thus engaged in building his 'self' and the process is akin to that employed by the bee for sucking honey out of the plants, fruits and flowers which it comes in to contact with. *Self* corresponds to the honey: it is to be sucked out of the world of objects by life, and thus alone will it be able to detach itself from the earthly shell for 'tenanting higher forms of expression'.

Many thinkers have likened the 'self' to a boat that is navigating the river of Time. I think a better way of describing the mystery of inner life is to say that the 'self' represents that sector of the stream of possible experience which is actually illuminated by the light of our life. *Ideally* I am the whole of the universe because I am the last

phase of its evolution and embody the condensed essence of all its power, its glory and its splendour. But *actually*, I am not all that since I have yet to realize my destiny. Empirically, at best, I am just a few petty purposes, some vanquished hopes. By enlarging the scope of my contacts with the world of creation, I can draw nourishment for my feeble self and feed it on thoughts that are appropriate to its growth. By a persistent effort I can make it grow till at last everything around it disappears into it—including the very ego in me, that cradle in which the life in me had started its infantine career.

5

Man, a creature of time, can reflect eternal values in thought and action: although the forces of Nature condition much of what constitutes his Being, there is some-, thing in him which is capable of giving a new direction to those forces and thus raise him above his circumstances. The infinite of Time and Space is given to his imagination for its free use; and, because nothing is settled in this kingdom of the possible, and therefore nothing is excluded from it, he is free to make of himself what he can and the specifically human in him can thus control his destiny. A great deal therefore depends upon what a man does to transcend the external determination of his personality by those factors and forces which emanate from Nature and Society. We are the product, in some sense, of the world we live in and are to a considerable extent influenced, not only by heredity but also by the ideas and values which correspond to the grammar of actual social conditions in which our lives are cast.

The greatest and the most decisive weapon in the service of human spirit is the power of thought. Our knowledge, to begin with, owes its very existence to the interaction of life's forces with the negative forces of matter, the last term being understood in the way in which the philosophy of Bergson has it, namely, that it is 'the inverse

movement of life'. Whatever be its limitations as an instrument of discovering philosophical truths, its utility and value as a means of acquiring mastery over the forces of Nature cannot be disputed. Through the help of knowledge alone can we reform the world and make it the venue in which the rich possibilities of human life can be fully exploited: the forces of rational criticism alone can destroy those prejudices, pre-conceptions, and primitive sanctions of ethics which have hitherto obstructed the progress of humanity.

As an instrument for the discovery of metaphysical Truth, our knowledge has undoubtedly certain limitations. The riddle of the Universe can never be satisfactorily solved by us. How is man's existence related to the Universal Force of Life, the 'Elan Vital' of which Bergson speaks, and how is man related to the world of Nature on the one hand, and to the world of the Spirit on the other; or, in short, what is his destiny in the entire scheme of things—these and such other questions are incapable of being answered, with any show of finality from the present premises on which Human Knowledge is based. Any philosophy which is dogmatic about the finality of the solution which it offers to these problems cannot therefore be defended. There is a wise saying of Goethe, that a man is born, not to solve the problem of the Universe, but only to find where the problem begins and then to restrain himself within the limits of the comprehensible. Philosophical pursuits ought not to be carried on in daring disregard of the limitations that are so clearly observable in the working of the human mind. We ought not to be oblivious of the narrow limits within which alone the rational faculties of man are capable of functioning fruitfully. "The great riddle of existence," says Dr. Robert Briffault, "the great objective universe which encompasses us, its nature and meaning, will probably remain for ever unknown to us. But we are beginning to perceive that that impossible knowledge is not so essential as we had been

wont to believe. Of one thing we may be perfectly certain: if we knew the world of the enigma, we could not know more certainly than we do now that our part in the great cosmos is wholly contained within the life and destiny of our race. We can be no less certain now, than we should be if the last veil of the mystery were torn open, that our task, our function, our duty is with the human race, that we are not concerned with altering the courses of the stars or kindling the brooding fires of the nebula, but with building the human world, with making it better, greater, with fulfilling the law of untiring effort and ceaseless improvement which governs the entire process of that racial life, of which ours is a part and parcel."

As to the philosopher's quest to discover the truth of things, we ought to approach it with a different attitude altogether. All human knowledge is provisional and the history of human thought down the ages shows us how the foundations of our belief in the validity of theories firmly held by their propounders have been questioned and ultimately demolished by later thinkers. There is, however, an obligation cast on us to keep the spirit of inquiry alive, to do our human best to understand the mystery of nature, life, mind and spirit. It is helpful to be conscious of the questions that philosophy raises, but at the same time we ought not to deceive ourselves into believing that any answers that have been made or can be made to these questions are a final verdict on the nature of Reality. We can never hope to know all that there is to be known. "The absolute," says Mazzini, "exists in the divine idea alone; the gradual comprehension of which is all that man is destined to attain; although its complete realization is impossible on earth; earthly life being but one stage of the eternal evolution of life manifested in thought and action; strengthened by all the achievements of the past and advancing from age to age towards a less imperfect expression of that idea. Our earthly life is one phase of the eternal aspiration of the soul towards progress, which is our law;

ascending in increasing power and purity from the finite towards the Infinite; from the real towards the ideal; towards that which is to come."

All Higher Philosophy thus co-mingles with religious experience and its expression can become effective only if it partakes of the character of allegorical symbolism. The desire to know is ingrained in us and animates all our efforts to discover the Truth. We have no option but to pursue, with due diligence and with the help of such faculties as have been given by God to us, any lines of thought which promise to lead us on to the solution of these problems. But in the end, all attempts to understand the Nature of things ought to impress upon us the realization that the only attitude permissible to us is to end our philosophical pursuits, in a spirit of humility, "in resignation before the Inscrutable, in awe before the Great Mystery". That anyhow is the mood in which Count Keyserling concludes his dissertation on "Immortality". Says he:—

"Watch the mighty wave in the Ocean. Ever the same it rolls onward, undeflected, to unknown goals. Unshaken, solid, and enduring as a rock it seems, and yet, at each moment the structure of it alters, at each instant the water of which it is composed, changes. What is the wave which abides? We can see it, we can hear it roar, but we cannot comprehend it; it escapes us. All that is palpable is unstable. Only the direction of motion is unchanged. What is this direction?

"Man's existence is like this wave. At each moment the conscious person forms the crest of it. It seems always the same. And yet at each moment it is composed of different elements. Only in change is its Being made known.

"Life is like this wave. It rolls on into the darkness of the Future, always the selfsame wave, only rarely checked perhaps by cliffs, changing its direction a little. The wave seems everywhere the same; and yet at each moment it is made up of different matter. It changes unceasingly.

What is the wave which abides? It is not to be comprehended. All that is palpable is unstable. Only the direction of motion is unchanged. What is this direction?

"What is Life? We can see it, we can feel it; comprehend it we cannot:

> Before it words turn back,
> And thoughts, failing to find it.

"All philosophy ends at last, in resignation before the Inscrutable, in awe before the Great Mystery."

The starry sky is a reminder to us of the measure of our reach. Men who partake of the character of 'dumb driven cattle' are stuck in the quagmires of the mere immediacies of life. They are lost in the mists of petty purposes. The truly liberated ones look up heavenwards and even when they engage themselves in earthly pursuits they walk humbly on earth, and thus are, in the image of the poet, "true to the kindred points of Heaven and Home."..

Let me then praise the power of the Lord of Creation who has built this "spacious firmament" with its countless stars and has given Man the inner resources with which to enjoy Him in His creation for ever and for ever. Does not Joseph Addison's "Hymn of Praise" express the same mood?

The spacious firmament on high,
  With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
  Their great Original proclaim:
The unwearied sun from day to day
  Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
  The work of an Almighty hand.

(1951)

The Knower and the known are one.

LOCKHART.

* * * *

...The world is sick to-day from nothing else than from the effects of 'attractive, valuable, satisfying' lies. A fool's paradise may be 'attractive, valuable, satisfying' —for a time to the fool; it is humanity at large that bears the brunt of the consequences.

That ineludible fate of all falsehood is the vindication of our cognitive powers. Those powers have operated despite all wills to falsehood; they have, in spite of all, made for accuracy of thought. Metaphysical thought has in spite of itself carried out the process. The 'failure of metaphysics' is essentially a misconception. I am one of the few who still believe in metaphysics; for I do not see that metaphysical thought has 'failed'. I see, on the contrary, that it has steadily approached, not indeed to those goals of Unmeaning towards which it deliberately steered, but, in spite of that fantastic steering, towards its only legitimate goal—accuracy of thought. That which is called the 'failure of metaphysics' is, in fact, the exact opposite; it is the success of metaphysics. Human thought has gradually purged itself into accuracy. Those things which were once assumed postulates, unquestioned pre-conceptions, have become to every thinker untenable, negligible, and obsolete. The meshes of thought have been drawn closer and closer and alternatives eliminated. The 'failure of metaphysics' has brought about this result, that we know now pretty well the uses of our cognition.

ROBERT BRIFFAULT.

* * * *

Knowledge of ourselves teaches us whence we come, where we are and whither we are going. We come from God and we are in exile; and it is because our potency of affection tends towards God that we are aware of this state of exile.

RUYSBROECK.

NATURE AND PURPOSE OF PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES.

It is indeed difficult, if not impossible, to state precisely what the subject-matter of philosophy is. The difficulty arises from the fact that every philosopher has a different conception of what philosophy is, and his views upon this question are, to a considerable extent, coloured by the kind of philosophy he himself professes. Philosophy does not, unlike other sciences such as Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Astronomy, carry its meaning on its face, or wear its heart on its sleeve.

Historically regarded, the philosopher's quest for knowledge at one time was co-extensive with the whole field of human learning. The early Greek philosophers were the wise ones, the sages, who knew all that there was to be known in their day. With the progress of human knowledge specialization became necessary: one by one, several branches of learning were detached from the parent stalk and assumed an independent life under different names. The last of the rebellious offsprings that was thus detached is Psychology, a subject which, even up to the middle of the nineteenth century, was a necessary part of, if not practically indistinguishable from, philosophy proper. Philosophy, which etymologically means 'love of wisdom', has now become a kind of special knowledge, not in the sense that it is concerned with a determinate subject-matter, but essentially because of the peculiar aims and objectives that inspire its pursuit.

So long as we human beings are confined within our present condition of finitude, a condition where there is manifestly a clear-cut partition between *what* we experience on the one hand and *what*, quite apart from our

experiencing of it, is believed to be the objective order of things which appears to control that experience, we cannot help reconstructing in thought, what the real relationship between the two is. Our perception, whether of the external world of Nature or the inner world of our mental states, at any given point of time, introduces us only to a limited sector of Reality. We ourselves witness the flow of events in the stream of our consciousness, an experience which gives us a feeling that whereas our mental states roll along their 'wayward courses' there is some permanent element or *entelechy* in the background which continues to persist and gives to these changing phases of the inner and outer world some meaning. Having regard to these facts of our mental life, it is but natural that, upon us should be pressed for solution the question, as to how the 'changing' and the 'permanent' elements noticeable in our experience are related. Ultimately, upon reflection, we may come to the conclusion that *change* is an illusion or that what appears *permanent* is not so, or quite likely it might even be that, the question itself might be declared by us to be unanswerable because it has been wrongly posited: but, in spite of all these dismal possibilities that stare us full in the face, there is an obligation cast upon us to think consistently about these apparently conflicting facts of human experience.

Philosophy, to my mind, is a mode of understanding human experience in a rational way. It tries to recreate in thought the relationships that enter into the several elements of our experience in an attempt to discover what the truth of the matter is. A series of manifestly contradictory answers have been given to what might be called the 'persistent problems' of philosophy; and if you read the history of philosophy, you will notice a bewildering variety of metaphysical systems, systems of thought that have hardly any points of contact in common. It is this feature of philosophy which has provoked some of its unkind critics to pass harsh judgment upon it. The

philosopher's mission has been contemptuously referred to as being analogous to 'the search of a blind man in a dark room for a black cat which isn't there'. The President of a certain American University some twenty years ago warned the students to beware of three things: drink, tobacco and philosophy. A philosopher has been cynically described as a man who "knows less and less of more and more", just as a specialist has been generously defined as a man who "knows more and more of less and less". Philosophy has been stigmatised as an unprogressive branch of human learning and not of much practical relevance for the successful settlement or the handling of human problems.. There are, however, others who take a different view of the role of philosophy. For them the philosopher is a man who sees life in all its fullness: from his Olympian heights he surveys not only all that there *is*, but all that which has yet to be or ought to be.

2

In what follows, an attempt will be made to enquire into the question of the possible utility of philosophical education, and to determine the source of its authority as the sovereign science, under whose benign and liberating influence all other specialised modes of perceiving truth are to be kept within the sphere of their allotted jurisdiction, and enabled to assist the human spirit in the understanding of its own place in the scheme of things.

It is necessary, particularly in this age of ours, that the importance of philosophical education ought to be realized and its role clearly understood. All old forms of thought and belief have been crushed by the death-dealing impact of the advances made in the various fields of scientific research and historical studies, and unless new rational foundations are furnished to support the tottering fabric of human values, all the incentives to human action, will have suffered a setback.

There has been a prodigious growth of human

knowledge and, thanks to the advances made in archaeology, great vistas of time in man's past history have been opened up. Modern astronomy, in its turn, has disclosed great vistas of space and has revolutionised man's outlook upon the heavens. Man is no longer situated in the centre of the cosmos and regarded as the recipient of special attention from the Higher Powers. He has been relegated to a peripheral and insignificant position upon a tiny planet: in a word, it is no longer for us the same friendly world in which our ancestors lived. Studies in Astro-physics leave us in no manner of doubt that man is the creation of those blind forces which had, in the words of Bertrand Russell, "no prevision of the end they were achieving". There has been noticed in recent times a growing unrest—economic, political, social, moral, religious unrest. 'Modern Man' has had to face wars of extermination. Many of us, confused by the mad rush of these awful events of recent times, have developed an attitude of despair and quietism and are now sitting idly, nursing the hope that soon, very soon, some new Messiah will come to show us the way.

But reflection serves to show quite clearly that no such deliverer will ever come—for assuming he came, what would he do to redeem mankind from its present state of helplessness and sorrow? The question for man today is not one of obtaining external aid, as of undergoing inner transformation. And to achieve this 'higher' state of being man has to fall back upon his own resources. In each one of us, if only we knew, God has already stationed a guide—I am referring to the voice of reason and of conscience, which is continually issuing forth from the profoundest depths of our Being, calling our attention to the things that count and demanding our obedience to the law which is writ-large upon the face of the skies. Therefore he who runs may read. The last of the prophets declared that the age of revelation was over. It was his mission 'to purify man, to teach him his destiny and philosophy'. Man is no longer under tutelage. There is really no

need for prophets to come and act as his guardian. He has outgrown his condition of immaturity and has been declared free. It is for him now first to re-discover and then to walk upon the path that leads on to God. He also has the option alternatively, to degrade himself and so walk down the path to perdition. He is free to make what he can of the time that is at his disposal. The only condition precedent for a successful pursuit of man's mission on earth is that he should 'ponder', 'think', 'reflect' and 'consider' all that he is a witness of—for then he would find that the evidence of what he is called upon to do is inscribed in the very veins of his own Being as well as upon the face of the world that lies outside him. Sa'adi could therefore justifiably claim—"The green leaf for the sight of the wise is like the book that furnishes knowledge of the Creator".

3

We have witnessed in our day the recrudesence of the same type of spiritual and moral degeneration, which, as the historians of antiquity tell us, overtook and throttled human progress and civilisation in ancient Greece in about the fifth century B.C. The traditional views on religion, morality, politics, science and art current in that age were subjected to ruthless criticism; the foundations on which their edifices were reared were examined and upon examination were found wanting. In that age, as even now, old sanctions of morality were dissolved, thanks to the destructive role that was displayed by man's indiscriminate use of his intellectual powers. His will-to-action which in earlier days had made for noble, heroic and dignified life now lost its point, because the premises on which it was grounded were demolished. It is in such times that it comes to be believed that intellectual pursuits lead to irreligion and immorality. Young people refuse to be bound by the ways of thought and belief in which their fore-fathers exulted. They then, as it has been said, get involved in loose

company and live a fast life. The age of Sophists in ancient Greece is the historic counterpart of and corresponds to the phase of intellectual anarchy through which we are living at the moment. The factors responsible for bringing into existence that sorry state of affairs, then as now, are indeed the same—callous indifference of mankind to, and the lack of faith in, the power of rational thought. If you want to create a lasting and durable basis upon which human conduct, private and public, can be grounded, immune from the attacks of modern criticism, you have no other method of going about the job except by using the power of Rational Thought.

The age of Sophists in ancient Greece was followed by the golden age of the philosophers like Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. It is these liberators of mankind who recovered for the ancients an ideological basis upon which to justify the maintenance of those ethical values and religious sentiments which had been consecrated by the devotion of those in whose footsteps they were anxious to tread. Our age has not, as yet, witnessed the rise of such intellectual figures as were symbolised in the persons of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in Greek history.

Our age has rightly been regarded as an age of interrogation. We have questioned and successfully undermined the inadequate sanctions on which our moral life has been reared; and unless we let the powers of rational thought once again provide a safe and lasting basis upon which to substantiate those values which make for human progress, peace and prosperity, we will continue to cry for light in this bleak age of despair. There is only one way to steer clear of the forces of chaos and disaster that are about to engulf the human race, and that way is to lay stress on the need of understanding the world in which we live. In other words, the development of a philosophical outlook has become a historical necessity.

"The present generation," says Mr. Muirhead, "has wakened to a new world in which it can no longer orient

itself—find its true East—or link its ideas with the past. There were signs of all this before the Great War. The war has only served to bring it to the surface. But the war has come and gone to little purpose if it has not done more, and shown us the danger our whole civilization was running from the loss of the older convictions as to the meaning of life and the relative values of things. Much has been written as to the cause of the war. We do not come within sight of the real cause till we see that it was being prepared for secretly in the hearts of Western men and nations for half a century and more by the confusion into which men's minds were being thrown by the loss of old ways of thinking and therewith of any effective criticism of the direction in which things, left to themselves, were moving. You will now see why I lay so much stress on the need of a philosophy in the sense I have explained. The whole future of civilization seems to me to depend on finding a true one to take the place of the old, that no longer holds possession of men's minds and hearts. You will see too how, to my mind, there is something religious about the question. It reminds one of what the New Testament says about 'the one thing needful,' the 'treasure hid in a field,' the 'goodly pearl,' for which an age, like an individual, might well be willing to sell all that it has, if so be it might buy it."

4

It ought to be clearly realized that the choice before us is not between 'philosophy' and 'no philosophy', but between 'true philosophy' and 'false philosophy'. Situated as we are, we have evolved, consciously or unconsciously, some attitude to life, and on the basis of that attitude and the various unconscious assumptions that are necessarily involved in the maintenance of that attitude, we are daily carrying on the great game of life. As rational beings, we cannot be contented to own 'blind beliefs' and cannot be committed to a course of conduct which is based on beliefs, whose very foundation and rationale we do not

know. Among many other aspects of this mysterious life of ours, the most conspicuous one is the *desire to know and to think and to reflect*, and this desire is also to be satisfied, in much the same way as we satisfy our desire for eating, drinking or any other similar biological need.

Accordingly, the main value of acquiring a philosophical education would seem to lie in the satisfaction that we experience when we set out to solve the riddle of the universe, to inquire into the grounds of our beliefs and to discover the evidence we have of our kinship with the world in which our lot is cast. We are born with the desire to know and when this desire is satisfied, we experience a rare kind of joy, a joy of which Bergson speaks when he says :—

". . . Philosophers who have speculated on the meaning of life and on the destiny of man have failed to take sufficient notice of an indication which nature itself has given us. Nature warns us by clear indication that our destination is attained. That sign is joy. I mean joy, not pleasure. Pleasure is only a contrivance designed by Nature to obtain for the creature the preservation of life, it does not indicate the direction in which life is thrusting. But joy always announces that life has succeeded, gained ground, conquered. All great joy has a triumphant note."

If we glance at the History of the intellectual development of mankind, say during the last 2500 years, we find the same questions obsessing the minds of thinkers from Thales down to our own day: questions concerning ultimate nature of reality, of the possibility of knowledge, of the precise nature of the human soul, and of the truth of spiritual life. And when we familiarise ourselves with the solutions that have been offered to us, we find that these crucial questions of philosophy have not, as yet, been adequately answered, and that, the ideal of intellectual consistency lies still unachieved. And the best evidence we can have of the inadequacy of the solutions offered is to be found in the several renewed efforts towards an answer that are even now being made by our contemporary philosophers.

Philosophical education also fosters the growth and facilitates *the development of a synthetic approach to the realm of knowledge.* Various positive sciences, like Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Psychology, are yielding to us different conclusions on, at times, practically identical issues, and if we were entirely left to the conclusions of these sciences, we should not be able to create any coherent, systematic and unified view of man's knowledge. Consequently, the need arises for another type of reflective thinking, which should regard all these conclusions of various sciences in its own way, and then try to answer the questions like what reality is, or what is appearance and what is truth.

A philosopher was described by Plato as 'a spectator of all time and all existence'. This is so because a philosopher tries to look eternity in the face, and is not lost in the world of appearance and of illusion. He sees life steadily, and sees it as a whole. We *do* know that there is a great deal of difference between things as they are, and things as they appear; between the pretensions and hypocrisy of a so-called friend and the genuine and profound love and devotion of a true comrade. In our every day life we are constantly coming across complex situations in which, as the need of the moment dictates, we try to discriminate between 'fact' and 'fancy', between 'truth' and 'falsehood', between 'appearance' and 'reality'. But, as is obvious, human experience is limited and the daily tasks of life take up so much of our time that when our daily work is done, it becomes practically impossible for us to sift, evaluate and scrutinize all the complex situations of life in an attempt to determine what the measure of truth is in all that we see and experience. A philosopher, therefore, reflects on all the best evidence he can get in the domain of a special science, considers the convictions of the theologian, the moralist, the artist, the mystic and the various religious prophets, and then views them in their totality to see, whether or not, he can harmonise the apparently conflicting conclusions of various departments of human knowledge. He

is eager to satisfy the ideal of intellectual consistency by undertaking a systematic and a comprehensive survey of human life and its destiny. Thus it is that a philosopher endeavours to engender in the human mind a passion for evolving a synthetic attitude to life.

We may next point out that a philosophical education fosters in the minds of its votaries a keen and a judicious sense for analysing issues and reducing them to their simpler forms. Due to the particular type of busy life which a man is made to lead today, and also due to his faulty education, it has become well-nigh impossible for a man to escape the grip of primitive forms of thinking, and the result is that he cannot think freely, coherently, clearly and correctly. In fact, *today* thinking is not something in which a man is interested for its own sake. The interests of every day life absorb his attention so much that hardly any time or energy, to say nothing of inclination, is left him to study the problem of clear thinking and to evolve in himself a type of a reflective consciousness which may enable him to appreciate precisely the relative values of things.

From what has been said so far, it is apparent that a constant pre-occupation with philosophical thinking will engender a habit of analytic thinking in the mind of a student; and this mode of thinking will, in its turn, bring about a wholesale change in his attitude to men and their affairs. Education in philosophy will go a long way towards promoting mental health not only in the life of an individual but also in the life of society.

Lastly, philosophy offers us a critique of knowledge. If we examine the foundations of modern science, we shall come across various axioms which the scientists necessarily have to postulate before they can make a study of their respective fields of inquiry. It will be seen that the whole study of a scientist would be invalidated if the axioms or the unproved assumptions with which he commences his study, somehow, turn out to be neither *correct* nor *necessary*. It is one of the most important aims of philosophy

to examine critically these postulates of science and to expose any fallacies which may underlie a given scientific inquiry. The function of philosophy, as we conceive it, is thus to furnish what may be called a critique of man's knowledge, and also to serve as the highest expression of its ultimate end. Philosophy is to man's knowledge what life is to his body. If the *life* deserts the body we can have no other use for the dead limbs except either to bury them in a grave, or to burn them on a funeral pyre. Human knowledge which does not draw its life from philosophy, is something that is dead, cheap and useless. The strength and vitality of man's knowledge will, therefore, depend on that intimate and close contact which it, in my opinion, ought to have with philosophical modes of thinking.

In this age of over-specialised studies it becomes all the more necessary to emphasize this particular aspect of the utility of philosophical education. Today so much specialisation is taking place in the camp of modern scientists that it has become well-nigh impossible for the specialist of one branch of human knowledge to know anything of the other. The result of this is bound to be disheartening. Some philosophic genius must step in to create a system of thought which is not only internally systematic but also sufficiently comprehensive to cover the total range of man's knowledge. Then alone can we be saved from the scourge of intellectual anarchy and chaos which seems already to have overtaken the vanguard of contemporary humanity.

Philosophy is not then a 'dull and dreary discipline' as most of its critics suppose, but is a *divine delight*, as Milton called it. Philosophers, it is true, differ in the answers they give to almost identical metaphysical questions, but this difference of opinion is no disparagement of their undertaking. What is important is not the *view* of a problem to which they are pledged, but the *way* in which they arrive at their views. *Their mode of thinking is more important than even the fruits of their thought.* Philosophy is more a matter

of an intellectual attitude than an advocacy of a system of thought. It remains, however, true, that not the best amongst us will ever answer, with any show of finality, those questions which have agitated a long line of thinkers since Plato; but, it is also true that here, as elsewhere, the value of any undertaking is not to be judged so much by its proximity to the final goal, as by the spirit and manner in which an affort is made to reach it. When it was asked of that great German thinker, Schelling, whether he would prefer to *have all the knowledge* to which a man may lay claim, or *to have merely the desire to know*, he answered that he wished to have the desire to know rather than the full knowledge of a man in its final form. And his choice, as even we can feel, was not wrong.

5

It is not wise at this stage to attempt a definition of 'philosophy'; for, that definition, if it is at all to come, must come at the end and not at the beginning of our study. After all, it can only be after we have actually familiarised ourselves with the mode and the goal of philosophical thinking that we can, with any precision, come to a conclusion as to what, in particular, should be offered as a satisfactory definition of philosophy. Though a full blooded and logically satisfactory definition of philosophy cannot be attempted at this stage, we must atleast find out what *in general* is the subject-matter with which we have to deal in a study of this kind and, what in particular is *the method* with the help of which we have to study that subject-matter.

In this connection the more expedient course at present will be to compare the aims and objectives of a scientific inquiry with those of a philosophical enquiry, and to distinguish the approach of philosophy from that of a religious, artistic or mystical approach. As we have said before, philosophy is an attempt to undertake a comprehensive survey of our experience of *Reality* and is an *unusually resolute attempt to think consistently and clearly.*

(*a*) *Philosophy and Science*

A science occupies itself with the task of *describing facts* of experience; and philosophy we may say, concerns itself with the task of *interpreting* them. A science is confined to the narrower purpose of understanding a *certain aspect* of reality and, therefore, its description of facts is conditioned by the partial view that it takes of reality. Philosophy, on the other hand, which deals with the entire realm of reality will study these *very facts* as they naturally appear in a *wider context* and as parts of a larger significant whole. Science accepts its own categories uncritically and is in no sense actively engaged in the task of reconciling its own categories with those which other scientists, working in different fields of experience have accepted. Philosophy makes an endeavour to reconcile, to collate and properly to harmonise the various categories of different sciences; and offers a consistent scheme of knowledge in which the different conclusions of sciences are co-ordinated and its structure organized. The work of the philosophy of nature only begins where the work of positive science leaves off. The data of science are in essence the data of philosophy, but the view-point with the help of which these data are adjudged is entirely different. It is not the facts of science that claim the critical attention of a philosopher so much as the hypotheses used by the scientists for the purpose of comprehending and describing those facts. Philosophy does not investigate and examine the validity of these hypotheses with a view to rendering them more elastic so as to include, under their application, a wider body of facts than has been done by the scientists; nor even does it attempt to render them more simple in form. All philosophy does is to view them and criticise them with the sole purpose of estimating their value as the account of the ultimately real existence. It is not the *adequacy* of the scientific hypothesis which is decided upon by the philosopher, but it is necessarily the *relationship* which these hypotheses may bear to the general structure of reality and

to the scheme of our knowledge of it, which he tries to understand.

It has been said, and very rightly, that a philosopher is not only concerned with facts of experience like the scientist but he understands those facts in relation to those *values* which the profound experience of mankind has been able to attribute to reality. Values, like truth, goodness and beauty, are not dealt with by the scientists; they are not susceptible of being dealt with by the scientist by virtue of the method which he employs, which is one of observation and a rigorous verification of hypotheses designed to explain the facts observed. Besides, as the validity of these 'value-judgments' cannot be examined by the scientists, all he tries to accomplish is to understand the world in a *detached, impersonal, objective* and *rigorously impartial* manner. A scientist eliminates from his view of the world all that could be put down to what is called man's 'personal equation'; he tries to eliminate his own 'self' from the situation in which he studies the facts of experience. Instead of trusting his own judgment to measure the heat of a substance by bringing his hand in contact with it, he designs a thermometer to achieve the same end accurately.

Our knowledge is not exhausted by positive judgments which we happen to pass on the course of natural events: but it also includes the normative judgments, (better known as the noetic judgments) that we pass on the significance and meaning of reality. The ancient Greeks, from whom modern Europe has inherited some of its schools of thought and rudiments of culture, divided human knowledge into two main categories—judgments of facts and of values. Thus when we say, "Oil is lighter than water", or "Crows are black", or "The sum of the three angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles", we are stating facts. But when we say something in regard to our appreciation of a thing or the value we assign to it, we are lending recognition to values. Thus someone may say, "Milton is a greater poet than Shakespeare" or "Philosophy is a better intellectual

discipline than science"; in such cases he sets forth what we as individuals *feel* about a particular thing. Our knowledge is thus either *factual* or *axiological:* it contains judgments of facts and judgments of values. All questions of facts are objective in the sense that they compel universal recognition, and there cannot be any two opinions about them; whereas all judgments of value are personal, subjective, relative, and therefore depend on inner feelings of individual conviction, culture, caprice, intent or even idiosyncrasies.

Now philosophy, which deals with the totality of experience cannot possibly ignore the existence of value-judgments. The subject-matter of its inquiry accordingly is wider than that of natural science. The answer a philosophy gives as to what reality is, will be based not merely on a philosopher's appreciation of those facts with which natural science is dealing, but will also depend on the deepest intuitions and the profounder experiences that the mystics, the poets, the prophets and artists have witnessed, as laying a claim, to their recognition. The traditional values like truth, goodness and beauty, claim the attention of a philosopher; and he must review the whole of experience and account for their presence and assign to them a place which is consistent with the theory of the world he is offering.

Thus, though the method and temper of philosophic inquiry may be at one with the method and temper of scientific enquiry, still philosophy endeavours to transcend, in its own way, the limitations of the scientific account of things.

(*b*) *Philosophy and Religion*

Having dealt with the relationship of scientific inquiry to philosophy, it becomes necessary at this stage before proceeding any further to propound the relationship between philosophy and religion. Religion may be defined as the attitude of an individual to his own life and destiny in so far as that attitude actually influences his beliefs and his behaviour. We use the word 'religion' to include, among other things, our recognition, whether practical, emotional

or intellectual, of an independent spiritual reality. Religious experience is definitely something 'beyond the high water mark of every-day emotion,' and implies a realisation of a higher order of things than that of mere sense experience. A man's religious faith means his faith in the existence of an unseen order of some kind, in which the riddles of the natural order may be found resolved. Religious experience is characterised by its appeal to the complete life as it expresses itself in the individual. It is not concerned with intellectual curiosity alone. Science, we have said, is an intellectual discipline. Its function is to appreciate, through the faculty of reason, the facts of our experience in a given field. It has nothing to do with the effect of those facts on our emotional nature. A scientist is indifferent to what the ultimate answer may be to the riddles that he is seeking to understand. He looks all his facts in the face, regardless of any prospect of hope or fear, whether or not they are in harmony with the emotional, religious or mystical predilections of mankind. All he is concerned with is truth; and no other consideration is of any consequence to him.

But man has not merely the intellectual side to his nature. There is something *deeper* in him which is persistently asserting itself and conditioning his outlook. The longing to be better, the desire to feel at one with creation, and to be in tune with the infinite, the inextinguishable faith in the doctrine that 'good will prevail over evil', and the belief that 'time alone is needed for the triumph of the right', are some of those aspects of his experience which go a long way to show that intellectual curiosity furnishes but a partial satisfaction in the scheme of the total psychological *make-up* of man. It is true that intellect plays a decisive part in liberating a man from the grosser needs of life, and in elevating him above the plane of the life of a beast; but, when all is said and done, it cannot be contended with propriety that intellectual satisfaction has an unconditional and exclusive claim to prejudice the due exercise of other faculties in man's life. If

we read the biographies of great intellectual workers, like J. S. Mill, Faraday, Hume, or even in our own day, of Madam Curie and Einstein, we shall find that they too have been of the view that sentimental, devotional, mystical and religious impulses in us should not, in any sense, be attenuated into a state of servitude at the cost of the development of the intellect. On the other hand, they maintain that all that makes life worth living and lends a halo and splendour to our daily tasks cannot come from the mere exercise of intellectual faculties so much as from the satisfaction of the emotional and religious cravings of our soul.

Religion and philosophy are thus co-extensive inasmuch as both deal with the problems of ultimate reality, of the meaning and purpose which we are to assign to human life, but differ in this that, the method employed by philosophers is intellectual, and has the same spirit of detachment behind it as we find reflected in the method of scientific inquiry. Religion, if it is a revealed one, is built on the foundations of authority and allows but little scope to the individual believer to exercise his thinking faculties in arriving at an independent judgment of his own; and if the religion is one which we call 'Natural Theology', (that is a set of beliefs which is arrived at by thinking directed to the on facts of human experience) its method once again becomes the same as is employed by scientific philosophy. Thus the difference between the philosophic and religious approach to reality is not one of reaching a different goal, but one which consists in the difference in the technique employed; religion is a matter of *belief*, and philosophy of a speculative attitude to reality. The needs of a religion are completely met if the follower of that religion can be induced into a believing state of mind, and this *belief of a religious nature* is definitely not the same thing as the speculative attitude which may be induced in a man of science or philosophy. The religious belief of an individual, depends not not so much on his theoretical or speculative attitude to life, as on the early influences that might have worked on his tender mind in

the formative years of his life, on the tradition in which he has been steeped, and also on the factors that transcend the scope of mere individual experience and reach as far back as the experience of generations that went before him. It is true that with the advancement and emancipation of the intellect in an individual, his beliefs also undergo considerable transformation, and tend to fall in line with the conclusions to which his thinking may have led him; but what is worthy of note is the inexorable fact *that this is not always so*. A man inwardly may be committed to a view of life which is founded on primitive and irrational beliefs and at the same time may be so trained scientifically and philosophically that he may effectively be able to partake of the contemporary intellectual content of the age. This is possible because intellect in most men is something external to life and not coextensive with it so as to be able, at all times, to condition it completely.

These fundamental psychological considerations of the nature of belief and theory have received much attention at the hands of modern philosophers: it would, however, suffice for our present purpose to conclude this aspect of our study by saying that the religious and philosophical fields of inquiry are practically the same in the sense that they raise similar, if not identical, issues; and that the real difference lies only in the kind of procedure and mental attitude that is adopted towards understanding them.

(*c*) *Philosophy and Art*

It will be in the fitness of things that at this stage, in order to elucidate the concept of philosophy further, we compare and contrast the attitude of a philosopher with that of an artist and the need for doing so becomes all the greater, when we recall that this aspect of the problem has not, comparatively speaking, received much attention at the hands of European philosophers. There has always been some prejudice which has not permitted the philosophers of the West to concede the

otherwise intimate relationship which art has with the philosophic attitude to life. The philosophy of art, it is true, has received considerable attention at the hands of some contemporary thinkers like Bernard Bosanquet, Croce and others; but even in the writings of these thinkers it has not, broadly speaking, been adequately brought out what in particular is the contribution which art can make to the advancement of philosophical pursuits.

Having regard to the view that we take of the aims and objects of philosophical education, it becomes very necessary for us to say as plainly as we possibly can, *that all higher philosophy in the end must be artistic:* in other words, the philosopher's view of the world and the expression of that view must be *inspired* and *dominated* by the same consciousness which we find conspicuous in the lives of the great artists we know of. In the first place, the philosopher's solution of the ultimate problems of life must emanate and well-forth from a life which should be characterised by, more than anything else, its depth and profoundity; for, then alone, can the system of his thought be found from the beginning to its end as a finished and complete whole, and not a fragmentary, desultory and disconnected utterance. There is no need to dwell in detail upon the limitations which an individual worker, who stands face to face with an immeasurable world of facts, must admit; for it is a super human task to bring together the fragmentary bits of our knowledge and integrate them in such a way that they should appear as the expression of one master idea. As it is, the task is immeasurably great, unless of course you bring for its fulfilment that *artistic approach* which has the tendency in it of producing a unity which is complete and to breathe new breath of life into the otherwise discordant and disconnected notes of human knowledge and thus impart to the whole a semblance of a living organism. I repeat, through the power and insight of artistic genius alone, can the immeasurable range and bewildering complexity of the facts of human experience be brought within the scope of

vision and given "a formless death and a deathless form". Art appears as a living whole, as something complete in itself; science on the other hand is bound to be fragmentary. Art unites and science disconnects. Art gives form to things, science dissects them. The man of science stands outside the world, for then alone, can he secure the objectivity of scientific conclusions: but this fact also would seem to point out the manifest insufficiency of his mode of dealing with reality; for, as soon as he leaves the sphere of accurate observation and proceeds to reduce the manifoldness of experience to the subjection of ideas, he finds himself hanging by the thin thread of abstraction, as if in an empty space. The artist, on the other hand, stands at the world's centre, for his creative power takes him far beyond what the mere senses can reach. The creative impulse in him is the manifestation of the very Creative Power that created him and the surroundings in which he is cast. Nor is this creativity, in any sense, to be considered as begotten of subjectivity. The creative power which is at work in the profound regions of the consciousness of an artistic genius is itself something that is *given:* it is thus, that fundamental feature of human experience which cannot possibly be regarded as a source of his relative judgments and illusory conclusions. That incidentally explains why an artist cannot be a good critic of his own works. The creations of artists are beyond the comprehension of their own intellectual powers. There are many instances in which poets have not been able to appreciate the full significance of their own poetry and it has been left to their critics to point out the real meaning of their utterances. An artist *par excellence* is to be conceived of as being the embodiment of a feminine principle, a mere receptacle for the fecundating impulse of the spirit to fertilize. That is why some of our great artists have regarded their creative powers as not being entirely amenable to their own bidding. They have to await the mood or moment of inspiration before they can serve as instruments for the communication

of transcendental significance. When that great German poet, Goethe, was asked why he did not take to writing poetry as a means of earning a livelihood instead of accepting an offer of serving the Duke of Wiemar as his adviser, he advanced two reasons in support of his decision. First of these was, that he loved poetry too dearly to make a profession of it; and the second was that there was no constancy about poetic inspiration and that it came when it must and was not under his control. There were periods in his life when he found himself unable to write any poetry; there were, however, other periods when he found himself fully occupied in writing poetry of a very high order. In his own words:—

"At other times, it has been totally different with my poems. They have been preceded by no impressions or forebodings, but have come suddenly upon me, and have insisted on being composed immediately, so that I have felt an instinctive and dreamy impulse to write them down on the spot. In such a somnambulistic condition, it has often happened that I have had a sheet of paper lying before me all aslant, and I have not discovered it till all has been written, or I have found no room to write any more. I have possessed many such sheets written diagonally; but they have been lost one after another, and I regret that I can no longer show any proofs of such poetic abstraction."

It was therefore impossible for him, under the circumstances, to make the writing of poetry a means of livelihood, for the very inspiration to which his poetic talents were subject did not obey his bidding. And when Eckermann asked,—"Are there, then, no means, to call forth a productive mood, or, if it is not powerful enough, of increasing it?" Goethe replied : "No productiveness of the highest kind, no remarkable discovery, no great thought that bears fruit and has results, is in the power of anyone; such things are above earthly control. Man must consider them as an unexpected gift from above, as pure children of God which he must receive and venerate

with joyful thanks. They are akin to the daemon, which does with him what it pleases, and to which he unconsciously resigns himself whilst he believes he is acting from his own impulse. In such cases, man may often be considered an instrument in a higher government of the world—a vessel worthy to contain a divine influence. I say this when I consider how often a single thought has given a different form to whole centuries, and how individual men have imprinted a stamp upon their age which has remained uneffaced and operated beneficially for generations.

"However, there is a productiveness of another kind: one subject to earthly influences, one that man has more in his power—although here also he finds cause to bow before something divine. In this category I place all that appertains to the execution of a plan, all the links of a chain of thought, the ends of which already shine forth; I also place there all that constitutes the visible body of a work of art."

It is these reflections which go to establish not only the objectivity of the truly great artistic creations, but also to account for the universality of their appeal. Much of the theory of the Ideas of Plato, or the Hegelian idea of the 'Concrete Universal' is explicable only in terms of some sort of mystical experience of which they had but a vague and intuitive knowledge; and their account of these experiences is but a vague conceptual rendering of what was felt by them in some moments of inspiration. William James, in his book on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, comes very near admitting this construction which I have placed on the central idea of Hegelian philosophy. He says in a foot-note at page 379 of that book:

"What reader of Hegel can doubt that that sense of a perfected Being with all its otherness soaked up into itself, which dominates his whole philosophy, must have come from the prominence in his consciousness of mystical moods like this, in most persons kept subliminal? The notion is

thoroughly characteristic of the mystical level, and the *Aufgabe* of making it articulate was surely set to Hegel's intellect by mystical feeling."

It must, however, be noted that what is vital in the writings of Hegel, as a philosopher, is recoverable only from those utterances which can bear the test of logic. But it must always be remembered that philosophy like all higher Poetry owes its power of appeal only to the communication of ideas which, by their very newness and transcendental significance, defy all attempts to be expressed in terms of common logic.

The other aspect of all great art is the spontaneity of its expression, the perfect congruence between the inner throbbing of an experienced reality and its outer expression. The genuine aesthetic emotion will necessarily burst forth into powerful and eloquent expression which, when heard or seen, will automatically, provided we have the appropriate sensibility, induce in us that very mood which was responsible for stirring the aesthetic consciousness to the height of its power. There is a necessary connection between the experienced state of a profound consciousness and its expression in the world of time and space. Only some such inspiration can explain why identical philosophies have been formulated in the same epoch by various philosophers. The calculus was discovered by Newton and Liebnitz at practically the same time, by the one in England and by the other in Germany. Even the theory of biological evolution was formulated by Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and Lamarck, practically about the same period though in different places. These historical occurrences cannot be put down to mere *fortuitous coincidence*, but must be taken as indicative of something deeper and much more profound than we are accustomed to concede. The laws formulated by Aristotle regarding the structural unity of place and time and action in a given drama were never known to the earlier dramatists and yet several of the greatest plays written by them do conform to

the standard of excellence formulated by him. This is so because the profounder the poetic consciousness, the more spontaneously does its experienced emotion spring forth in the world of expression. This does not in any sense mean the negation of inner *freedom.* Shakespeare created with perfect inner freedom without being obsessed by any idea that the structure of his plays should conform to any standard of excellence conceived as something external to his consciousness. And yet, we find in that spontaneous expression of the experience of his inward artistic emotion, the compliance with all those structural rules of dramatic technique which have been formulated by critics of art. Therefore it is that we say that all higher philosophy can only be voiced from a plane of consciousness which is dominated by an artistic attitude to life. Is it not significant that we notice in contemporary philosophical literature a marked deterioration in the quality of metaphysical thinking and at the same time find that art also has fallen into disrepute and has no longer the power of appeal for the human heart that it once had? The greatest philosopher of all time, Plato, was himself a poet of a very high order and all the sublimity which we find in his philosophic expression is due to the deliverance of the artist in him. This may even be said of Bergson, the celebrated author of *Creative Evolution*.

(*d*) *Philosophy and Mysticism*

Finally, let us consider the relationship, that subsists between philosophy and mysticism. There is, to begin with, a close community of purpose between the two. The difference lies more in the method than in anything else. A mystic, we may say, has a distrust of all discursive and analytic knowledge; he has a belief based on his own direct experience that there is a type of knowledge which is higher than the mere analytical and that this higher type of knowledge is capable of yielding an insight into the inner meaning of things, an insight which it is not possible to

gain otherwise. All men who are capable of observation, while under the sway of an inward passion, must have experienced at times a strange feeling of insight into objects, as if they have peeped into the very heart of things. In such experiences we discover hidden meanings. Those articles of faith and belief, to which nearly all the mystics are committed, are arrived at independently of any reflective process, and whatever reasoning we may find in their writing, comes in *post facto:* that is, after the mystical experience of this unique contact with *Reality* is over, and its purpose merely is *to lend a support* to the conviction which mystics seem to possess in regard to the infallibility of higher knowledge. "Reality" says Bertrand Russell "is regarded by them with an admiration often amounting to worship. It is felt to be always and everywhere, close at hand, thinly veiled by the show of sense." The poet, the artist, the lover are merely *seekers* after the glory, but the mystic *lives* in the full light of vision and what others dimly seek he '*sees*' with a steadfast gaze. He knows of *that knowledge* besides which all other knowledge is ignorance.

When once in communion with reality, the mystic does not descend into the world of men and things, and makes no attempts to offer any explanation as to the relationship of reality with appearance. A philosopher, on the other hand, has complete *faith in the powers of cognition and the supremacy of the intellect* and for him the knowledge gained through the intellectual method is sufficiently reliable. He is slow to repose his trust and confidence in the so-called higher knowledge. Of course, there are philosophers like Bergson who have raised intuition to the highest pedestal of glory and have argued that conceptual knowledge is incapable of mirroring the true nature of reality. The limitations of analytic knowledge have again and again been pointed out by some philosophers: this, I must say, is not the place to attempt a refutation of their standpoint, but a few general

observations of a critical nature may not be out of place here. But before I do so, it is necessary for me to point out that it has *never* been claimed that intellect can know all: all that is beyond experience can never be known. What is contended, however, is that within the framework of our human experience intellect *can* furnish accurate and certain knowledge. Whether or not a given operation or activity of the intellect does furnish accurate and certain knowledge does not, so much, depend on the proper exercise of our powers of cognition, or the perfection of our methods of reasoning, as on our desire to exclude the operation of other motives, conscious or unconscious, that adulterate the deliverance of our intellectual powers. Even the trite assertion that there are things that our intellect cannot know from the strictly philosophical point of view assumes that we know enough of those things to be able to say that they cannot be known. The conative tendency in man goes all out for pleasant and sugar-coated falsehoods. We must always be on guard against the onslaught of the *will-to-lie* and the resulting tragedy of embracing "the attractive, valuable and satisfying" falsehoods as though they were the very revelation of God's Truth.

I will take up the argument which has been advanced by William James—about the inadequacy of intellect to furnish to us with the basis for comprehending the truth of the deliverance of Religious experience—an argument which, more or less, can also be invoked to assert that intellect is not able to understand the true nature of human experience.

William James, as is well-known, in his book *The Varieties of Religious Experience* undertook an examination of the possibility of demonstrating, by purely intellectual process, the truth of the deliverances of direct religious experience, and came to the conclusion that "in all sad sincerity it must be conceded that such an attempt is 'absolutely hopeless' ". His main argument was that conceptual

processes can class facts, define them, interpret them; but they do not produce them nor can they reproduce their individuality. There is always a *plus*, a *thisness* which feeling alone can answer for. Philosophy in this sphere is hardly able to accomplish this and so he proceeded to defend the philosopher's quest in the matter of comprehending religious experience as follows:—

"It would be unfair to philosophy, however, to leave her under this negative sentence. Let me close, then, by briefly enumerating what she *can* do for religion. If she will abandon metaphysics and deduction for criticism and induction, and frankly transform herself from theology into science of religions, she can make herself enormously useful.

"The spontaneous intellect of man always defines the divine which it feels in ways that harmonize with its temporary intellectual prepossessions. Philosophy can, by comparison, eliminate the local and the accidental from these definitions. Both from dogma and from worship she can remove historic incrustations. By confronting the spontaneous religious constructions with the results of natural science, philosophy can also eliminate doctrines that are now known to be scientifically absurd or incongruous.

"Sifting out in this way unworthy formulations, she can leave a residuum of conceptions that at least are possible. With these she can deal as *hypotheses*, testing them in all the manners, whether negative or positive, by which hypotheses are ever tested. She can reduce their number, as some are found more open to objection. She can perhaps become the champion of one which she picks out as being the most closely verified or verifiable. She can refine upon the definition of this hypothesis, distinguishing between what is innocent over-belief and symbolism in the expression of it, and what is to be literally taken. As a result, she can offer mediation between different believers, and help to bring about consensus of opinion. She can do this the more successfully, the better she discriminates the common

and essential from the individual and local elements of the religious beliefs which she compares."

Now it would be noticed that the disparagement or distrust of intellect is due to the realization that it is not able to render into a conceptual framework the essence of mystical, religious or spiritual experiences. Its method, it is complained, is to proceed by abstracting what is essential in the experience from the total feeling which that experience brings with it: it is not possible, it is said, to separate the essential from the non-essential aspect of what admittedly is an unanalysable and unique whole.

The fundamental mistake, however, which is apparent in this mode of thinking is the failure to discriminate between the *symbol* and the thing it *symbolises.* It is true that the quality of life as lived, of time as experienced, of love as felt, are matters which it is not possible to adequately *represent* by means of any conceptual processes, no matter how very refined they may be. But at the same time it is the office of intellect to evolve a language of symbols which should serve as a pointer to the meaning of experience which it attempts to transfer to us by means of conventional sounds. I may write the word "blue" with *green* ink and yet be sure that the fact of its having been written in green ink will not alter the meaning of the word "blue". Similarly, I may draw a straight line AB and say that it represents temporal continuity between moments A and B, but I do not imply that the line, as drawn on a piece of paper, is the same thing as the flow of time as a duration or as experience of time as lived by us. The feeling we have of ourselves as growing old between any two moments cannot be captured, mirrored or photographed by a conceptual mode of dealing with it—but surely it is too much to say that it cannot even *refer* in the mind of one who is engaged in grasping what it is employed to suggest! All attacks against intellect therefore miss the mark. Intellect merely enables us to capture, for the purposes of action, the essential framework of experience, and in the field of understanding it

merely symbolises those elements of experience which, on the one hand, from the nature of the case, cannot be adequately represented in the language of concepts, but which, on the other hand, nevertheless, have to be concentrated upon in order that they may serve as a sign for any other projected or possible experience. The trouble about the whole procedure of doubting the power of the intellect is that any attempt to do so necessarily involves the assumption that the intellect has at least the limited capacity of showing that it cannot be trusted, an assumption, which, as any intelligent person can perceive, is another way of suggesting that to that extent its deliverances are trustworthy. All crusades against what is triumphantly attacked as "Intellectualism" are, unwittingly it seems, carried on once again by the Intellect.

The role of intellect is to discriminate in the present experience, the sign of the experience that is not present: either it succeeds in disentangling this sign or it does not. But the success or failure of its adventure has no relevance to the nature of its activity. If it does not succeed for the first time another cognition will soon displace the previous one and, as in life, so in the higher operations of the mind, we proceed by trial and error. Some beliefs are simple and can be easily verified by an appeal to facts. If I say that there is a chair in the next room, the fact can be confirmed by merely going to the room and seeing if it is there. This is verification by perception. There are other beliefs, however, which refer to what lies beyond experience, and therefore cannot be checked. "But," says Dr. Robert Briffault, "no cognition, true or false, valid or invalid transcends experience, for no question can arise at all except out of experience, and the relation to experience which sets the question likewise checks the validity of the answer. The only difference is that the control of experience is exercised more or less directly, takes longer or shorter time to operate. Experience demands cash, gives a short or long credit, but payment is invariably exacted. The meaning

of a belief is either in terms of our experience whether sensory or affective, whatever the postulated condition of that experience; or, it is in the apprehension of the inapplicability of those forms of our experience. But whatever differences may obtain in the condition of our cognition those of our veracity remain unaltered. We think—fancy has been sedulously encouraged—that we are at liberty to shape our 'Truth' as we please because no stern contradicting experience will pull up and chastise us. *It will.* We, or our, children, will be pulled up, will pay the full penalty of false cognition as surely and far more disastrously than if experience punished our self-deception by checking us on the spot. The consequences of Big Lies are exactly of the same kind as the consequences of Little Lies—they are found out."

The philosopher not only has faith in reflective and analytic and discursive knowledge but, unlike the *mystic, he is not content merely with achieving communion with reality and, as it were, stopping there.* He comes out from his contemplation of the Absolute and gets back into the world of appearances and tries to discover and formulate the relationship that reality has with the world of appearances. The mystic's attitude, as contrasted with the philosopher's, is negative, and his aim is to seek *satisfaction of his emotional nature* more than the intellectual; and he uses the language of vague imaginative symbolism which is the only language suitable to suggest an unanalysed and immediately experienced state of consciousness. *Mysticism therefore has never succeeded in advancing the cause of human knowledge:* it lacks in, what a recent philosopher has characterised as, the quality of transferableness. The reflective type of knowledge *can be transferred to any person who chooses to be benefited by it* and is such that its record can be accurately maintained and handed on from generation to generation. The mystical literature of mankind is a *literature of power* and not a literature of accurate information, and cannot, therefore, be transferred in the sense in which reflective

knowledge can be transferred. The ancient mystics of India, the *Bhagtas* and the *Sadhus*, realised a higher state of life through their devotional attitude to reality but their realisation could not become the property of mankind as they could not successfully communicate that depth of feeling and the profoundity of experience which they had realized in their own consciousness. The result was that their convictions and their intuitions remained with them as their own private property and the rest of mankind could not share the benefit which may have accrued to them, had the knowledge about them been such as could have been easily communicated and transferred. A mystic is satisfied with *a lower type of immediacy of* experience and does not know that this lower type of immediacy of experience through the deliverances of discursive knowledge could be analysed into still simpler elements and then again integrated into a higher type of *immediacy*. A philosopher achieves this higher type of immediacy of experience through the *analytical and critical attitude he adopts towards that immediacy of experience with which a mystic remains contented.*

It follows from what we have said so far that philosophy is quite a different type of knowledge from either scientific or mystical knowledge and that its attitude to reality is vastly different from the attitude of the religious minded person or artist. Philosophical education has one master-purpose before it—*the pursuit of truth*; and this purpose is always to be steadily kept in view while we are engaged upon the task of philosophising. Like every other game, the game of philosophy too has its rules. The most important of these rules is the one which says *that the regard for truth shall finally decide the fate of any issue which may be at stake* and that no prejudice, ethical, religious, utilitarian, etc., shall be allowed to affect, even in the slightest degree, the decision which we may take in regard to the solution of a particular philosophical problem. Thus it is that I maintain that the lasting well-being of the human

race depends upon metaphysics. Philosophy will free us from superstition, from blind beliefs, from the unconscious life of animals; and through the study of metaphysics alone will a man be able to regain that freedom which is not his birthright, but only an ideal to be attained, a goal for which he has to labour and make all the sacrifices.

It is only too true to say that we shall never be able to solve the riddle of the Universe. It is true also that our knowledge will, in the end, only show us the limitations of our understanding. It is to be conceded that towards the end of our philosophical studies we may even be profoundly convinced that these deeper convictions, of which the mystics and poets have spoken so much, convictions about the freedom and immortality of the soul, about the dignity and destiny of man, etc. are after all no better than mere *subjective illusions* that have been induced in us by circumstances over which we have had no control. We may even come to the conclusion that metaphysics is an impossible science; that it is vainly struggling to solve something which is incapable of being solved. We may even come to the conclusion that even if metaphysics is possible, it is a useless, superfluous and an unprogressive science. But all these considerations will, on the other hand, provided they are rightly regarded by us, inspire in us the confidence that *whatever effort we can put forth to study the mysteries of our inner life and the mysteries of the external world*, has actually been put forth, and that, since we have done what we could do, as rational beings, we should be contented in accepting with good cheer whatever insignificant position we are compelled, by the logic of our thought, to accord to human life and its destiny in the scheme of things. There is some happiness to be felt in knowing the nature of the world we are in. As Mr. R. B. Perry, an American Philosopher, has said, *it is better to know the worst if there such be than to dream the best.* "Only within the scaffolding of those truths" which we may discover as philosophers, are we to build the edifice of our

hopes and our aspirations. To think freely, unburdened by any considerations other than the consideration of truth, is a privilege peculiar to man, and he must undertake to exercise that prerogative in the hope that he may be able to recover the foundations of a higher life, a state of being higher than the mere life of the animals. Let a man hope that *that Power* which has fostered in him a passion for *knowing* and *discovering* truth will not cheat him of his deepest intuitions but that it will kindly lead him on from darkness to light and from light to more light.

6

Let me, as I come to the end of the present discussion, say a word or two about the *nature of philosophical method*. We cannot, it is true, decide off-hand what method is best suited for carrying forward our philosophical pursuits. The cogency of a method will be decided by the results of its application and the justification of the method can only come at the *end* rather than at the *beginning* of our study. Yet we can roughly set forth the well-known characteristics of the metaphyiscal method and indicate in advance their possible fruitfulness and utility.

The philosophical method is *analytical* and *critical* in character. The analysis of experience will lead us to the discovery of the simpler elements of which it is composed. It will be *critical* because we shall have to estimate the philosophical worth of scientific categories with reference to the standard furnished by our thinking. The method will be *constructive* in the sense that, if successfully carried out, it will yield us an intellectual attitude to life and its problems which we did not possess before.

The metaphysical method employed by some of the greatest philosophers has differed considerably. It should be remembered that many who take to philosophical education come from different fields of scientific study, and it is but natural to expect that they will bring into philosophy the prejudices or preconceptions, the habits of thought and

training, acquired in those specialised studies. There are, for instance, philosophers like Bertrand Russell, and A. N. Whitehead, who have been influenced in the selection of an appropriate method in philosophy by their mathematical predilections. Other philosophers like Lloyd Morgan, L. T. Hobhouse, and Herbert Spencer have carried into philosophy the method which is peculiar to biological sciences and their whole attitude and perspective, designed to gain them a philosophical survey of experience, has been considerably dominated by biological categories. Other philosophers like Sir Arther Eddington, Professor Ward and Sir James Jeans, were not only influenced in the choice of their philosophical method but also in their view of reality by the studies they carried on in physics, astronomy and other allied sciences. There are many thinkers who have paid homage to the idealistic philosophy mainly because theirs was the *religious* and *humane* attitude to the world of experience, and we shall find in their writings the prejudice of religious and ethical considerations outweighing even the logical.

Ever since Bacon introduced in his *Novum Organum* the principles of scientific inquiry, the problem of right method or the proper technique of conducting the quest of philosophy has been with us and has not ceased to clamour for a proper solution. Kant was not the first, and certainly he has not been the last, to ask why philosophy has failed to enter, like physics or astronomy, *upon the sure and steady path of science*. In our own day, the spectacle of the progress of natural sciences, and of mathematics, has once again brought the problem of method to the very forefront of philosophical discussions. Once again philosophers point to the method of science and advocate its adoption even for the purpose of answering philosophical problems. The advancement of sciences, it is said, must be due to the pre-eminence of their method.

This, no doubt, is a tempting suggestion. The spell of science is upon us all and we cannot resist it. Its practical

uses, its detached, impersonal point of view, its ethical neutrality are marked features of its temperament. Only the impersonal cosmic outlook of science can help us on to sweep away all other desires in order to fulfil the desire to know. "A life devoted to sciences," says Russell, "is a happy life and its happiness will be derived from the very best sources that are available to us on this troubled planet." Now, all these considerations have led philosophers to ask, 'Is there one discernable scientific method which may practically be resorted to by philosophers themselves?'

Unfortunately, many are the methods which have been adopted in the study of the various sciences, and this is so because the subject-matter of these sciences is itself not a homogeneous one. There are some sciences that adopt the empirical attitude, others the contemplative. Which of them are we going to commend to the beginner in philosophy? The true scientific method according to Russell is the *logico-analytic*, a method of modern mathematical logic. This method draws its inspiration from the success of contemporary mathematical science, in which concepts like number, continuity, and motion have been analysed into simpler logical notions. Mathematics, so developed, becomes one with logic. This discovery has reinforced the traditional admiration for mathematics. This method, it is true, is precise, clear and will yield the ideal type of knowledge; but, as is obvious, the application of *it is restricted to the study of the deductive sciences* and can succeed only where the *analysis* of complex concepts is undertaken with a view to reducing them *into simpler notions.*

The utmost a philosopher can do with this *logico-mathematical* method is *to adopt it for the sake of understanding the ultimate* categories of knowledge, so that he may be in a position to render them into their simpler elements and thereby avoid the possibility of remaining contented with complex notions.

We cannot, for reasons which will become clear when

we proceed further, adopt the Hegelian dialectic as a philosophical method. Present day science has shown the impracticability of such a method and even the best exponents and followers of Hegelian philosophy have a distrust for this method. The main charge against the Hegelian system of philosophy, namely, its formalism, has been preferred against it principally because these 'dialectical' philosophers have undertaken to perform the impossible task of reducing the totality of our experience to a single logical formula and of reconstructing the world of experience on the basis of it. The Absolute, of which these philosophers talk, contains the principle of its own movement in itself:but it is clear that if we try to evolve a formula which is *universal*, we can only do so at the sacrifice of its sufficiency. Logical categories do certainly, because of their priority over everything else, yield us formulae which are *universal*; but, for that very reason, they are not *sufficient* to explain experience. It was the philosopher Plato who attempted to reduce everything to the *idea of the good* and in its turn the idea of the good was made to explain every concrete item of human experience as we know it. Hegel did the same on the basis of the *absolute idea* at which he arrived through the dialectical process. He wrote out an encyclopaedia of sciences merely on the basis of his dialectical reasoning and this attempt very rightly was denounced by his own follower, F. H. Bradley, who characterised the Hegelian system itself as an "unearthly ballet of bloodless categories."

The student of philosophy has to assume a critical approach to the various philosophical systems that he is to study, and it is a matter of great importance to know, as clearly as we can, the method or technique which is to be employed in *estimating, refuting and criticising* philosophical systems. We must not only point out the logical, or metaphysical flaws in a given philosophical system, but at the same time we should be able to point out how and why the error in question arose. The greatest reverence, says

T. H. Green somewhere, that we can show to the system of a Philosopher is to pull it to pieces and show where and how the philosophical thinking has been vitiated by its besetting sins. If we examine the role of criticism in the domain of literature, we shall discover that there its function is merely that of pointing out how the given creation of an artist falls short of an ideal he has in view. But a critic of philosophy, after having accomplished the initial task referred to above, goes a step further and points out how and why *a particular error has vitiated the conclusion of a given philosophical inquiry*. The History of philosophy, therefore, is not a dull study. It not only familiarises us with the contributions made by great thinkers to the solution of philosophical problems but, at the same time, it lays bare before us the manner in which they regard the philosophical systems of their predecessors. The aim of philosophical criticism is not merely to become destructive. It is not the mere *negative* and *reactionary application of a critical faculty* which is expected of us in philosophical criticism. On the other hand, we expect to discover 'the pitfalls, the besetting sins, the concealed traps,' into which our thinking is likely to fall if we are not *sufficiently vigilant*.

1946—
An address to students.

Ruins exercise a greater magic upon us than well preserved works of art, not merely because they suggest to our souls in the image of the past, the idea of transitoriness; nor because the work of art corroded and worn by time stimulates us just as the unfinished work of art does, by inducing the mind to supply what is lacking in reality; the essential magic of ruins is due to the fact that they show human powers of creation as a part of the forces of the cosmos by which transposition they acquire an infinite background instead of the limited background of one personality or one age.

COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING

* * * *

"Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp
Or what's a heaven for?"

ROBERT BROWNING

* * * *

Mighty of heart mighty of mind—"magnanimous"—to be this, is indeed to be great in life; to become this increasingly, is, indeed "to advance in life"—in life itself—not in the trappings of it. . . . He only is advancing in life, whose heart is getting softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace. And the men who have this life in them are the true Lords or Kings of Earth—they and they only.

JOHN RUSKIN

REFLECTIONS ON THE 'MOUND OF THE DEAD'.

If you want to have a glimpse of the sort of life that the people inhabiting the Indus Valley lived some fifty centuries ago, it is not necessary for you to await the invention of the *Time Machine* of which Mr. H. G. Wells speaks in his book of that name. With a little imaginative insight and sympathy you might succeed in recalling the hoary past back to life if only you visited the site of the excavated ruins of the 'Mound of the Dead' at a place about twenty miles west of Larkana, in the Province of Sind, Western Pakistan.

A visit to that place is a remarkable experience: the utter unreality of time and the vanity of man are borne out from the face of everything you see. While I stood on the ruins of 'Moen-jo-daro', strange thoughts began to haunt me: and as I attempted to reconstruct, in imagination, the picture of the past which has left its traces in these ruins, I was overtaken by a mood of deep dejection. Decay and destruction, I began to muse, is writ-large on the face of everything we behold. Man walks proudly on earth, totally oblivious of the inevitable doom that awaits him and his race: in fact, he is so much taken over by a false sense of pride that he does not even heed the warning of that approaching end to which, every moment of time that flies past by him seems vainly to call his attention. In the mood that I was, I was reminded of what Shelley had to say about the vanity of Ozymandias of Egypt:

"I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown

And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal these words appear:
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

As I sat on the Buddhist stupa (in the S. D. Area) of the 'Mound of the Dead' I began to visualise the Indian scene as it must have existed about thirty centuries before Christ. The very name India, as recent research has disclosed, in its original Persian sense, then meant the Sindhu river, the 'Indos' of the Greeks. In fact all that region which is fed by the water of Indus and its tributaries was then the real India. The geographical structure of the present Indo-Pakistan mainland, with its high Himalayan walls on the North, must have presented itself to the nomad wanderers from the North-West as a new world altogether. The rich alluvial soil of the plains, fed by its natural river-system of the Indus and her half a dozen tributaries, must have offered to the weary feet of the wanderers 'the gift of rest'. It could not have been easy then for them to have negotiated the uncertain and winding, narrow, North-Western passes of India in order to gain admission to this world of luxuriant, tropical vegetation and hospitable climate of the Indus Basin. They must have been impressed not only with its flora but also its fauna—the tiger, the panther, the leopard, the buffalo, and of course, the many varieties of reptiles. These adventurers from the barren and inhospitable Iranian Plateau must have been grateful to their 'stars' for this find and must have, without much hesitation, settled down in these 'fresh woods and pastures new', to a life of comparative ease and leisure—at any rate, to a sort of life which was radically different from the one they

must have been used to in those hostile regions from where they came.

It is difficult to say whence precisely these adventurers came, whether from Central Asia or from the extreme West, that is, the zone which surrounds the Mediterranean Sea. Even the approximate date of the entry of the Aryans, which is comparatively speaking but a recent phenomenon, is not known. But speaking roughly this event can be placed round about 1500 B.C. Nor again, however, are we clear as to the sort of pre-Aryan races that inhabited these plains. Whether these aborigines were Dravidians or whether they were of the Malayo-polynesian family or whether again they were related to the Australians or to the Samoyeds will never be known from the existing archaeological and scriptural records. Any light thrown on the mysterious pre-historic past of India by the available evidence is so dim that a mere conjectural reconstruction would not be 'history' although it might be, I venture to think, very fascinating fiction indeed.

The little we know of the pre-Aryan phase of civilisation in the Valley of the Indus is largely due to the evidence that has been made available to us since 1924 as a result of the excavations that were carried out here. Sir John Marshall and Mr. Mackey have published the results obtained by the archaeological survey of this place but many of their findings have not been accepted by some other archaeologists of repute. Some of the most crucial questions raised by the discovery of these ruins still remain to be answered—in particular, it has yet to be determined, what sort of civic and economic and political life was lived by the inhabitants of this place, the sort of arts and crafts in which they indulged, the dress, the ornaments, the toys and the games they were able to design to lubricate the rough courses of their earthly life. The little we know in relation to these questions is so nebulous and mystifying that it is not wise to say that these problems have been settled once and for ever. The findings based on the

archaeological survey of Moen-jo-daro have been summed up in '*in Quest of Civilization*' by Ronald Latham as follows:—

"The area covered by this civilization was twice that of Old Kingdom Egypt and nearly four times that of Sumar and Akkad together: it embraced a great part (perhaps the whole) of the valley of the Indus and its tributaries of the Punjab (Five Waters), with outliers further west in Baluchistan; it is not yet known whether it extended east into the Ganges Valley. Over all this area the material culture was remarkably uniform. It was even more remarkably uniform in time: the seven levels excavated at Mohen-jo-daro (perhaps covering the period c.3000-2500 B.C.) are scarcely distinguishable, except that the later buildings are inferior to the earlier ones. It is evident that a civilization so highly developed, widespread and stable must have a long past behind it, so that it may quite conceivably be older than either the Egyptian or of the Mesopotamian. Like the Mesopotamians, and unlike the Egyptians, the Indus people used wheeled vehicles: their carts were of the pattern still used in the district. Without such elaborate irrigation (which was probably less needed in the relatively moist climate of the Indus Valley in those days), they cultivated many of the same plants—wheat, barley, dates, etc.—with the addition of cotton but apparently not yet rice. They had domesticated many of the same animals—sheep, camels, possibly also horses, but apparently not donkeys. They had also tamed those typically Indian animals the elephant, the buffalo and the humped ox (zebu), and probably the jungle fowl, the ancestor of our cocks and hens. In metal work they were generally inferior to the Sumerians, though a bronze saw from Mohen-jo-daro is the most efficient tool of its kind known before Roman times. Much of their pottery was poor stuff—mechanical and mass-produced rather than primitive—but some was excellent and quite distinctive. They were fond of toys, which (judging from the number found in waste pipes) they

used to take into the bath with them. They also shared the traditional Indian taste for dice and board-games."

The most fascinating question that suggests itself to anyone who visits this place is to account for the way in which the end of the city might have come about.

There is a photograph available of what was discovered at one of the places when the excavations were going on—a photograph which has been described as "the final massacre scene". If one looks at this photograph, one will see the bones of several human beings suggesting that their owners had been caught in flight: they seem to suggest that the inmates of this place were suddenly overwhelmed by invaders, who apparently, being armed with deadly instruments of violence indiscriminately slaughtered them. Such scanty literature as exists on the subject, however, does not present to us any plausible theory on the basis of which one might satisfactorily explain the extinction of this town. Was this town deserted in the face of the threat by foreign enemy or was it evacuated in an orderly way because of an impending catastrophe like the floods? One can support any of these theories by an appeal to some arbitrarily selected pieces of archaeological evidence but the fact remains that, as yet, no hypothesis which is completely consistent with all that has been discovered has been suggested—a hypothesis that can be accepted to the exclusion of other rival ones. This is how, for instance, Sir Mortimer Wheeler in his book "5000 *Years of Pakistan*" reconstructs the final massacre scene—an event which according to him might have taken place by about 1500 B.C.

"We are once again on the eastern fortifications of the citadel of Mohen-jo-daro. Before us lie the familiar straight streets, stretching far away towards the Indus. But otherwise the scene is a very different one from the peaceful evening home coming which we witnessed before. Now volumes of smoke and flames are rising from several of the houses below us. Led by a gesticulating man in an

outlandish chariot drawn by two small ponies which are stretched at a flat canter, a horde of howling swordsmen is rushing down one of the main streets. By the chariot-pole crouches the charioteer, and every now and then the swaying figure beside him fits an arrow to a short, stocky bow and discharges it into the panic-stricken groups of fleeing citizens. As we watch, a gang of desperadoes turns into one of the side-lanes where half-a-dozen wretched creatures, including a small child, have just emerged from a house and are seeking escape. In a moment their bodies are sprawling in the dust and their cries cease. A little further on, rash refugee has returned for some treasured knick-knack, and he shares the same fate. At another spot a pathetic group of eight or nine figures, half of them children, are emerging heavily laden from the Quarter of the Ivory Workers. They are surrounded: their screams reach a brief crescendo and die away. Their treasures have been transferred to other hands, and the looters are thrusting upon their way. Elsewhere again, we look down on one of the public well-rooms, in which local house-folk were drawing water when death came to their city. For a time they have cowered beside the well as the screams and the shouting draw steadily nearer. Now they can bear the suspense no longer. Two of them are climbing the stairs, have reached the street, when the invading mob closes upon them. They drop, and are instantly trampled into the sand. A burly fellow with raised sword turns on to the well-house stairs and cuts down the cowering woman who is struggling up them. She falls backwards across the steps, and her companion, still beside the well, is struck down instantly. Laden with plunder, the ravening horde sweeps on. A part of it is already streaming up the long stairway into the citadel on which we stand. It is high time for us to take flight into the future, through thirty-four centuries during which the poor bones of the massacred will lie there in the derelict streets and lanes until twentieth century archaeologists shall dig and find them

where they, with their age-long civilization, perished within the hour."

2

Certain it is that before the advent of the Aryans, the Dravidians of Baluchistan and those of the Indus Basin, were the first to be submerged by the mounting tide of the wars of extermination. A close scrutiny of the Vedic literature would point out the existence of the black races, the Dasyus, whom the Indo-Europeans appear to have conquered. The earliest record of human history in India as elsewhere familiarises us with wars of aggression and violence—the conquest of the weak by the strong, the law of the jungle, that has been and will always remain, is writ-large on the pages of human history.

Such reconstruction of the pre-historic phase of development of the human species in India as is now possible, is the result of elaborate studies and research conducted by scholars in the fields of archaeology, ethnology, philology, and a critical study of the religions of antiquity. Ancient India hardly has a history, and such written documents as have been made available to us for tracing the chief factors in that history do not even go as far back as the time of Alexander, whose entry in India is generally believed to have been round about 328 B.C. Evidence of his invasion has been furnished by the archaeological findings based on an appreciation of the exhibits revealed by the excavation at Taxila in the North-West Frontier Province. Regardless of the fact that many centuries have passed since the event, I can still see Onesicritos, the cynic, discussing Pythagoras and Socrates with the naked ascetics and the Buddhist Bikshus—it was there that the first contact seems to have been established between the Greeks and the ancient Indians. And it seems as if it was only yesterday that Alexander crossed the Indus on a bridge of boats, at a place slightly above the confluence of the Kabul river!

Although the use of the written script is suggested

by the pictographs that are to be seen on some of the seals that have been discovered at Moen-jo-daro, it is perfectly clear from all relevant evidence that is available on this point that the ancient Indians were averse to recording the events or annals as they occurred—much seems to have been left to the memory of the priests. From father to son, down the ages, such knowledge as these priests cared to retain for themselves in their memory was handed on to posterity. It is largely due to Greek historians like Arrian, Diodorus, Siculus, Plutarch and Strabo that we have authentic accounts, of the chief events in the history of ancient India. The history of ancient Iran, too, has much to do with the history of ancient India. We know a great deal about the interaction of the Iranian and Indian cultures round about the time of Cyrus (558-529 B.C.) whose empire that extended to the Punjab and survived down to the days of Darius (521-485 B.C.).

The ancient history of mankind, however, is dominated more by the priests than by the princes and the most decisive factor in the making and unmaking of ancient civilizations is undoubtedly religion. What was the religion that was followed by the Dravidians who lived here? It is difficult to answer this question with any show of finality. Although there is evidence which justifies the belief that many of the structures rescued during excavations correspond to our conception of what the shrines or temples of antiquity could have been like, it has not been possible, so far, to clear the issue by attributing any of these structures to any specific religion we know of. The stupa over which I sat to get a panoramic view of the City of the Dead has itself been described by some as an ancient edifice of some forgotten Faith although it is more in the manner of a Buddhist Temple than anything else that we can think of. Some of the figurines that have been discovered have also been interpreted as being indicative of the expression of religious art: one such figurine shows the emergence of a plant from her womb—and that

has been understood as being evidence for the creed of 'Nature worship'. It indicates that the goddess of fertility was held responsible for a bumper harvest or for the desiccation of the land!

It is difficult to analyse various phases of that religious development which ultimately culminated in the literature of the Vedas. The religious life of ancient India, like its social life, has to be reconstructed from a confused mass of chronicle bearing upon local traditions, sacrificial rites and social customs. Whatever may have been the earlier forms in which the religious development expressed itself, it is undoubtedly true that the Dravidian cults left a considerable impression on the early life of India. The veneration of idols and the worship of deities, most of whom were conceived of as females, appear to have set in as a result of Dravidian influence.

"We know nothing", say the authors of 'Ancient India and Indian Civilization' "about the amalgam of Sumerian and Dravidian ideas which must have reigned in the Indus basin before the coming of the Aryans. But through it the religions of India are in part derived from the ancient religions of Mesopotamia. Animism, the belief in the creation by the efficiency of the Word, and the worship of a Mother Goddess are very old Asiatic and Sumerian convictions, and Iranian Ahura and Vedic Varuna are continuations of Anu, god of the sky, but also of rain and therefore of water, who was worshipped at Sipper and Nippur from the beginning of the third millennium B.C. The similarity of name between Ahura (Asura in Vedic) and Ashur, the eponymous god of Assyria, is striking, and we may add that the *apsu* of the Babylonians is probably equivalent to *apas* (waters) in the Vedas. Many Semitic legends, especially Assyro-Babylonian, were brought by the same road into the inheritance of India, such as the story of the Deluge, which must, in its most eastern form, have united with the myth of Manu. Lastly, Chaldean astrology was also handed down to the Hindus".

3

While I sat reflecting on the ruins of the 'Mound of the Dead', I could not help musing over the ephemeral character of all human achievement—civilization after civilization has come and gone, mighty empires have been built and destroyed and in fact nothing has been spared by the ravages of time. Every form of human achievement, so it seems, is doomed inevitably to be buried under a debris of ruins. In fact, the whole astronomical career of our planet offers an eloquent testimony to the truth of this verdict. We do not know precisely when it was that the solar system was formed after it was weaned off from the womb of the sun: nor do we know for how many thousands of years our planet had to bear the burden of 'Creative Evolution' which ultimately brought forth man on its bosom. Such a repertory of archaeological remains as is available to us has been subjected to analysis, examination and cross-examination with a view to discovering the *age* of Man. When we begin to write the story of his career, of his attempt to build durable and lasting civilizations, we cannot go any further than the third millennium B.C. and then too the only verdict we are entitled to pass upon it is, in the words of Hobbes, that man's life is "dull, nasty, brutish and short."

With all our Twentieth Century conceit about the achievement of modern science, we cannot be oblivious of the fact that our civilization is perennially exposed to all manner of attack from wars of extermination. Thanks to the advancement of modern science itself, and the power it has given to man over the forces of nature, it is a practical possibility that some day, by his own rash action, man may succeed in releasing forces which will not only destroy all that he has built and achieved, but may even dislocate earth from its predetermined orbit—that elliptical path on which it has been ceaselessly whirling with all earnestness and humility round her mother, the sun.

But assuming that man is able to carry on in the way he has been doing without completely annihilating himself and his species, the time is bound to come when the heat and light of the sun that seem to sustain life on earth will have been exhausted and that the sun will someday present only a dull coppery surface. The life of the kind we know on Earth is possible only under suitable conditions of light and heat and anything which might upset the balance in either direction of excess or defect in its output would necessarily bring about the extermination of all life. The operation of the second law of thermodynamics also points to the same conclusion. In the words of Sir James Jeans: "There can be but one end to the Universe—a 'heat-death' in which the total energy of the Universe is uniformly distributed and all the substance of the Universe is at the same temperature. This temperature will be so low as to make life impossible. It matters little by what particular road this final state is reached. All roads lead to Rome and the end of the journey cannot be other than the universal death".

What then, may one ask, is the *utility*, the ultimate survival value of all that the life of mankind on our planet has planned and executed? What about all the fever and strife of our earthly struggle, the sufferings, the tribulations to which all mankind is prey? If the ultimate end is death and oblivion, what consolation is it to say that our duty lies in the present and that we ought not to concern ourselves with the ultimate dark and dreary doom that might overtake us?

4

All these dismal thoughts have frequently obsessed me, but there, surrounded by those ruins, my consciousness was able to reflect them much more vividly. The career of man on this planet, the achievements of his species in history, do ordinarily appear meaningless. It is difficult to comprehend the meaning of Man's

life if you consider the problem from these postulates, and Nietzsche whose approach to this question is along these lines naturally reaches the conclusion that it is practically impossible to assign any significance to man's life. He says :—

"In former times people sought to show the feeling of man's greatness by pointing to his divine descent. This, however, has now become a forbidden path, for the ape stands at its entrance, and likewise other fearsome animals, showing their teeth in a knowing fashion, as if to say, No further this way! At the far end of this path stands the funeral urn of the last man and the grave digger (with the inscription, *Nihil humani a me alienum puto*). To whatever height mankind may have developed—and perhaps in the end it will not be so high as when they began!—there is as little prospect of their attaining to a higher order as there is for the ant and the earwig to enter into kinship with God and eternity at the end of their career on earth. What is to come will drag behind it that which has passed: why should any little star, or even any little species on that star, form an exception to that eternal drama? Away with such sentimentalities!"

Regarded from the viewpoint of Man's earthly career, there is only one way of making the whole scheme appear significant and that is to see in man's earthly or temporal career the evidence of the existence of another life for which this life may be regarded as a preparation. The essential thing for man is not what he attains in the way of what passes for earthly splendour—but what he reflects by way of a heavenly light. It is only if we assume him to be immortal that everything with which he is connected becomes significant.

Ordinarily it is not so easy to see why we ought to regard our faith in a life beyond death as an essential element of our religious life. Regarded from outside, the life of man is hardly to be distinguished from the life of lower animals or even of plants. The basic truth of all life, namely,

that it has not only a capacity to *impose* an inner condition on the external concourse of Nature but also to *transform* the non-living into living by a process of inward assimilation, applies as much to the vegetable, the animal as to the human life. To the rationalist, the phenomenon of death presents itself simply as the antithesis to birth, as a mere end of the powers of the individual organism, and in that sense, of course, the death of the vegetable and of the animal life has the same meaning as the death of man. If these assumptions are to be given an absolute rigidity even in philosophical speculations, there is no room for anyone to raise the question whether Man has to expect anything beyond the day of his death. If the verdict of physiology is to prevail, and if the function of the brain is to secrete thought much in the manner in which the liver in our physiological system secretes bile, we cannot possibly argue that with the cessation of the physiological activities our biological organism, our psychic life could be prolonged beyond the grave.

But over and above the mere demand of the fulfilment of the biological functions, there is undoubtedly very much more in man that manifests itself. Man has been blessed with "a sense of wonder which gives a child his right of entry into the treasure house of mystery which is in the heart of his existence." In all higher poetry and art, we find a manifestation of that creative impulse which is not directly relevant to the maintenance of the physiological organism but which all the same, gives all the dignity, grace and governance to our life. "Who would", asks Dr. Martineau, "ever think of referring the sentiment of wonder to its physiological use? It neither helps the digestion nor regulates the temperature, it succours no weakness; it repels no foe: the labour to which it incites, the enthusiasm which it kindles often detract from the animal perfection and consume the powers of organism and only elevate the level and widen the relation of life opening to it intellectual interests and possibilities

unlimited in extent and inexhaustible in endurance. The sense of beauty, in its human maturity, emerges from the sphere of physical sense and takes possession of an ideal world, moulding thought into literature and character into drama. If you judged these features of humanity by a prospective instead of a retrospective measure, and asked yourself whither they look rather than whence they come, could you hesitate to say: "it is for these that we are made; these it is to which we must yoke our physical power in humble service, by which we are to rise above it, and pass into a life of larger dimensions."

I am reminded of the enunciation of the same principle by Rabindranath Tagore in that famous essay of his *The religion of an Artist.* Says he,—

"There is an illustration I have made use of in another paper, in which I supposed that a stranger from some other planet has paid a visit to our earth and happens to hear the sound of a human voice on the gramophone. All that is obvious to him, and most seemingly active, is the revolving disk; he is unable to discover the personal truth that lies behind, and so might accept the impersonal scientific fact of the disk as final—the fact that could be touched and measured. He would wonder how it could be possible for a machine to speak to the soul. Then if in pursuing the mystery, he should suddenly come to the heart of the music through a meeting with the composer, he would at once understand the meaning of that music as a personal communication.

"Mere information of facts, mere discovery of power, belongs to the outside and not to the inner soul of things. Gladness is the one criterion of truth as we know when we have touched Truth by the music it gives, by the joy of the greeting it sends forth to the truth in us. That is the true foundation of all religions, it is not in dogma. As I have said before, it is not as ether waves that we receive light; the morning does not wait for some scientist for its introduction to us. In the same way we touch the infinite

reality immediately within us only when we perceive the pure truth of love or goodness, not through the explanation of theologians, not through the erudite discussion of ethical doctrines."

Each one of the denizens who lived many centuries ago and walked about in the streets that I saw spread out before me, as I sat on the Mound, is dead and gone and from the point of view of his earthly career is heard of no more. But while he lived, he felt that he was greater than all he saw around him. He tried to express his creative genius by leaving the stamp of his soul on things he came in contact with : he gave to 'the ever-vanishing show of the world' a 'formless death and a deathless form.' He captured the sharply disappearing but, nevertheless, exalted moods of his inner life in the net-work of external symbols. In short, he had intimations of immortality and tried to express the infinite in the way he could. He had a spiritual relationship with the outside world. He walked under the starry sky and wondered at the mystery of Creation. All this experience means evolution in a direction other than the one in which the mere biological evolution proceeds. It is an experience which is personal to each one of us and Death cannot destroy its reality—at the most it can destroy its manifestation on Earth.

From the first dawn of Human Life we see all things working together towards one mighty goal—the evolution in the life of the individual of the most exalted and spiritual qualities which characterise humanity. Could it be said that this is all ephemeral—'like the bubble that bursts and the vision that fades'? If you take that view, the whole of human history in which man plays such a prominent part becomes a riddle without a meaning—nay, nothing short of a cruel joke. But the more thoroughly we comprehend that process of evolution by which things have come to be what they are, the more are we likely to feel that to deny the everlasting persistence of the spiritual element in man is to rob the whole historical process of its meaning. It is

merely the recounting of the fact of Man's history, and not being able to interpret them in the light of this principle that makes our perspective so faulty and gives cynicism the opportunity to possess and capture our soul. Earthly life, unless located in the context of spiritual evolution is, in my opinion, meaningless.

These consideration also bring out more prominently the all-important truth that the individual alone is the bearer of the value, that although, for the growth and development of individuality, well organised social existence is a necessary prelude, the ultimate function of society itself is to create conditions under which the individuality of man may grow and expand. I do not agree with those philosophers who sacrifice the individual to the all-embracing social synthesis in which he, in their opinion, enters but as an insignificant and inconsequential element. It is true that the individual and society act and react on each other, but the main purpose and the task of evolution is to enrich individuality, to secure the development of human personality. Regarded from the evolutionary point of view, reaching back to the apeman, and caveman there unquestionably has been progress of some sort although this progress is restricted only in one direction: man has achieved greater mastery over Nature, greater freedom of action. But if the judgment is to be based on an appreciation of some absolute value, incarnating itself in the onward march of History, it is doubtful if we can say that there has been, as between primitive man and modern man a *real change in the level of life.* If, in each case, the ultimate court of appeal is the direct experience of life, who can say if modern man is more cognizant of the finer possibilities of life as being implicit in his distinctive power of consciousness than the man of antiquity? All human knowledge is provisional and anyone who has critically studied the history of the development of man's knowledge knows that what has been believed at one time to be a correct representation of truth has been abandoned at

a later stage. The question whether there has been an all-round development of the personality of man is open to doubt, although, in an appreciable measure, it is true that modern man has generally advanced far beyond the achievements that we put down to the ingenuity of caveman. There have been tragic failures of civilization and, in fact, not an ideal but has been abandoned and abdicated by man under the stress of impending catastrophe. Greed, violence, and such other baser emotions seem to have claimed the loyalty of man more than the higher graces of life.

5

How shall we then define to ourselves that goal in terms of which we should be able to judge the value of civilization? In the so-called drama of human history, what is the plot, the design, the final meaning of the whole show? Many answers have been given to this question. Here is what H. A. L. Fisher has said on this point. I am quoting from the preface to his celebrated History of Europe:—

"Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave, only one great fact with respect to which, since it is unique, there can be no generalizations, only one safe rule for the historian: that he should recognize in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen. This is not a doctrine of cynicism and despair. The fact of progress is written plain and large on the pages of history; but progress is not a law of nature. The ground gained by one generation may be lost by the next. The thoughts of men may flow into the channels which lead to disaster and barbarism."

Many, however, will tell us that this is a meaningless question and manifestly we cannot give to it a precise and

positive answer: we cannot state it in terms that might permit either empirical verification or admit of logical analysis. But neither can we escape it. We naturally come to it over and over again only because we wish to make sense of history—we are forced to consider it if only because man persists in answering it. And the only valid answer that can be given to the question raised here is to say that the value of a social organisation, or of collective existence consists in its capacity to create a possibility of, or actually make for, the growth of individuality. The creation of a completely conscious and well-integrated personality is the be-all and end-all of all social organisations. It is only by this test that you can judge its value and justify its claims!

It is now generally recognized by students of social History that the community came first and that the individual with his rights is the product of a developed society. The growing emancipation of the individual from the yoke and tyranny of society is clear from the recorded facts of human history. Any society where the individual is completely subordinated to the tyranny of social purposes is not to be regarded as something valuable or significant. Those thinkers who uphold the claim of society as being predominant and superior as compared to the claims of the individual will not be able to support their view-point if they were asked to state what they want this regimentation in society for—if it is not the happiness of the individual, if it is not the question of the enrichment of his consciousness and of the development of his personality, then, what is it that, in their judgment, human society is here for?

Nor again is human individuality illusory. It is wrong to suppose that an individual is an abstraction and that society is a concrete synthesis of human valuations. The dialectical argument so ably exploited by Marx could not, even in the hands of so able an exponent as Hegel, build a rational foundation for the belief that the individual was after-all an unreal abstraction and mankind the concrete Reality. It is true that over and above the individual we have the

family, the society, the nation, mankind; and that in some sense, these represent a higher synthesis. It is also true that man finds happiness when he participates in these higher formations and that he does seem to find in them greater opportunities of self-realization. In fact, no individual lives for himself. All his nobler impulses have relevance to a supra-personal synthesis. Primitive man primarily felt himself to be a member of society and, in fact, he was linked up with social synthesis so much that he developed a religion of "ancestor-worship" thus giving evidence of the fact that he was one not only with his contemporaries but also with his forbears.

6

In the view I have taken of the supremacy of man's individuality I have assumed that no other conception of Reality is relevant excep the human conception. The age-old question, 'whether independently of the human view-point values subsist in their own right unaffected by the circumstance whether or not they are perceived, enjoyed or appreciated by human beings', is incapable of being answered by man. It is true that man is a late arrival in the scheme of evolution and that before the emergence of intelligence the cosmic processes have subsisted independently of having been perceived or understood by man. But all values like truth, beauty, goodness, cannot be considered 'objective' in the sense that we can postulate their independent existence regardless of man's perception of them. The universe may be viewed as a unity which includes in its structure humanity and it is in some sense dependent on it for its existence. It may also be viewed as a reality that exists independently of human consciousness. In the last case although it is possible to have some notion of world as a reality independently of the human consciousness still even that notion owes its orientation to the human point of view and is not, therefore, in the absolute sense of that term, independent of it. Whether or not the

flower which I judge to be beautiful is or will be so, if there were no human beings to enjoy its fragrance, is a question which is meaningless. All our approach to the world of truth, beauty and goodness is essentially a human approach in the sense that it is in some sense dependent upon the interest with which we regard reality. I believe that a man's being does not represent only the last phase of cosmic evolution, but it epitomises in itself completely all the forces and factors that have gone into its making, so much so that the last phase does contain, not only the first but all the intermediate phases as well. It is all a matter of emphasis as to how far our consciousness becomes cognizant of all the elements and phases that have entered into the making of the world. The argument that it is possible to have notions about possible existences independently of their effect on human consciousness cannot be refuted, but it certainly can be declared irrelevant since human condition is implied in all knowledge situations and it is not possible to determine what things would be like, independently of their relationship with human consciousness. Man is the fulfilment, and not merely the last temporal phase, of creative evolution. I would prefer to follow what Rumi says in his *Masnavi* on this point—

From the pure star-bright souls replenishment is ever coming to the stars of heaven.

Outwardly we are ruled by these stars, but our inward nature has become the ruler of the skies.

Therefore, while in form thou art the microcosm, in reality thou art the macrocosm.

Externally the branch is the origin of the fruit; intrinsically the branch came into existence for the sake of the fruit.

Had there been no hope of the fruit, would the gardener have planted the tree?

Therefore in reality the tree is born of the fruit, though it appears to be produced by the tree.

Hence Mohammed said, "Adam and all the prophets

march behind me under my banner."

Hence that Master of every lore uttered the mystic saying,
"We are the hindmost and the foremost:"

That is to say, "If seemingly I am born of Adam, yet in truth I am the ancestor of every ancestor.

Since the angels worshipped him for my sake, and he ascended to the Seventh Heaven on my account,

Therefore Father Adam was really born of me: the tree was born of the fruit.

The idea, which is first, comes last into actuality, in particular the idea that is eternal."

It is thus only in the subjective sphere of life that its richness and power can be felt directly and this can be possible only in the life of the individual. Real individuality is that which swallows up the 'universal'—it is that in which the whole 'choir and furniture of Heaven and Earth' gets submerged.

It is the Destiny of Man to realize this Truth. The world of Time, of History, presents only the opportunity and this earthly life constitutes only the stage and the occasion for the realization of this Destiny. This world is, afterall, a valley of soul-making. Human History is a record of the external manifestation of Man's capacity to reflect the Universal. "The Bounds of Soul", says Heraclitus, "thou canst not find out, nay, even though thou treadest every road; so *deep* a ground hath she". The actual assessment of its achievement cannot be made here below because, not only does each Man carry his own Cross, but it is best known to him how much forward he has carried himself with it on the road that counts. And the final result is known to Him alone who built this world of strife. Does not Keyserling say—"Even in Genius, it is the manhood which hallows the individual. This sublimity of the immeasurable, of the imperishable which surrounds the creative Power that we ought to reverence; it is the highest which our life contains. But he who trembles in awe before the Manikin is worshipping the dust." Such a

fully developed man is immortal "Death when it reaches such a man", says the *Mahabhartum*, "becomes a thing of nought—even as the man becomes a thing of nought when he reaches the realm of Death."

7

For my part, I believe in the immortality of the soul, not so much as a demonstrable truth of science as an act of supreme Faith. Even before I read Kant and grew to admire him, I was instinctively of the opinion that having regard to our present state of consciousness, it is not possible to reach, by the mere process of metaphysical reasoning, the conclusion that man's life, as lived on earth, has another sequel beyond his grave. The role which pure reason plays in guiding philosophical thinking on these ultimate questions is merely negative: it demonstrates that what we can know through our sensibility and understanding is only the phenomenal world and that the world of truth as it is reflected in our consciousness is necessarily modified by the forms of our thought. Every seeker after truth ought to know the limitations of his own faculties of cognition: he ought to realize that at the plane of normal consciousness, the discursive thought of man is more or less exercised on a pure outward movement. Thought, in this sense, is an instrument of action, and has been evolved by life to be able to deal with its natural environment and so secure adjustment to its ever-changing courses. How can intellect which has been evolved by life to deal with 'matter' comprehend 'life'? When employed by man in the service of his metaphysical instinct, it can, as has been shown by Kant, only play the role of being a critic of possible experience.

The only way to discover truth is to make the power of thinking an inward movement. Then alone can one succeed in experiencing the intimations of Here-Beyond directly—in that sense alone can the act of knowing become a function of a higher form of consciousness.

'Nature' as we know it 'mediately' is after all a reconstruction of our understanding. What is it 'in itself and as such' quite apart from its relationship with the cognitive consciousness is a thing that will never be known. The entire debate between idealism and realism on this issue is ultimately based on the "Theory of Relationship" to which you are committed as a result of your predilections to a given form of logic: if you believe in the theory of external relationship—a theory that says that the fact of an entity being related to another does not modify that entity at all—then you are necessarily a realist, and you would maintain that the external world in its relationship with the subjective consciousness of a 'psychological knower' will not, by the mere fact of such a relationship undergo any transformation. If you, however, believe in the theory of internal relationship, *i.e.* that by the mere fact of a relationship, the entity related gets radically transformed and modified, then you are an idealist in the epistemological sense of that term and you would hold that the phenomenal world is but a reflex of the reality as it pre-figures in your consciousness.

The great contribution which Kant made to philosophy was that he once and for ever fixed the boundaries of our psychological consciousness in relation to its capacity to know reality. He declared that pure reason was incompetent to deal with metaphysical questions: whether or not man is free, whether or not he is immortal, whether or not there is an ultimate cause that has created the world, will ever remain questions that are incapable of being satisfactorily dealt with by an appeal to pure reason. This negative result, however, is not something that is final; it makes room for further development in the sphere of what he called 'practical reason'. And there is, as Edward Caird remarks, so much comfort in the negative results of the critique of pure reason! It is true that pure reason cannot demonstrate to us the validity of our moral and religious intuitions, that it cannot prove those assertions on which the

foundations of a higher life can be safely laid down. But at the same time, it should not be forgotten that by imposing limits on the play of pure reason Kant was able 'to protect religious and moral life, not indeed from the danger of being considered illusory, but from the danger of being considered illusory on one special ground, namely, that it and its objects cannot be brought within the circle of ordinary experience'. After Kant had achieved these results, nobody could be justified in invoking empirical principles to explain away the consciousness of our higher intuitions that we have of the 'here beyond' of our destiny as free agents and of our capacity to continue the effect of an earthly life on the other side of the grave.

It is necessary to remind ourselves that the problem as it was posed by Kant was to discover how far knowledge, such as we have in pure mathematics and physics, is possible. He necessarily had to investigate the possibility of knowledge from the premises of normal consciousness. But the possibility that this normal consciousness can be deepened and the existing level of life of which it is a mere reflex can itself be changed into something higher was not investigated by him.

Supposing one were to change the level of one's life, would not its capacity to know also get increased; would not knowing then become a function of being in a sense higher than the one we are prepared to concede at present? Human thought is significant in two senses: as an intellectual correspondent of an external object, and as a means of expressing an independent and autonomous meaning which is not given to us in our sense-perception. What hinders us then from countenancing the possibility of changing the very level of life itself and of our evolving a higher type of consciousness? Is it not conceivable that it is the higher form of consciousness which may enable us to perceive reality directly?

Kant never proceeded beyond the 'frontiers of metaphysics', highly suspicious though he was of the powers of

reason to take him to that realm. He could not have very well done that. Philosophers like Fichte, Schelling and Hegel built up a defence on the premises of Kant of what they regarded was their intuitive knowledge of metaphysical reality. Nor is Bergson again, in my opinion, a true metaphysician in the sense in which I am now considering the role of metaphysics. He, too, has relied on the deliverance of intellect in building up a defence of what he calls "Intuition". He himself, I suspect, does not possess anything in the nature of that faculty which he calls intuition: he has not transcended the barriers of normal consciousness and although some of the conclusions which his treatise on 'Creative Evolution' led him to assert are valid as far as they go, yet once again, the support for them in the way of his own thought is to be found in their having been backed by the exercise of intellect and intellect alone.

Some of the mystics of the East have rightly emphasised the desirability of deepening our consciousness by changing the level of life. The intellect in man must be made coextensive with life—at present it is but an accidental and unrelated appendage, having been evolved in response to life's demand for 'Action'. A man ought not to be contented in regarding intellect as a mere faculty in the service of practical interest of life. If mankind wishes to attain a higher state of insight, it must learn to break the narrow prison-walls of its present consciousness. Agnosticism of which Kant speaks is only a temporary phase in the evolution of our life, and by the culture of power of concentration and by living a life of non-attachment and disinterested benevolence, a man can find a second birth in a world where the ultimate questions of metaphysics are not so much solved as cease to be the riddles they are at present. The world of spirit is not another world: this self-same work-a-day world in which we live, move and have our being, can become the world of the spirit provided we change the plane of the consciousness from which we regard it at present—and the deeper one penetrates into

one's self and draws one's nourishment from the profound vital forces of life the wider becomes the range of the world one comes into conscious contact with. Whoever could achieve this would have attained salvation, the cosmic consciousness of which some of our contemporary philosophers speak. Progress in this direction lies through living a life of longing and conscious concentration on the spiritual needs of our Being...

8

I, too, have wandered in search of 'light'—the metaphysical instinct in me has made me restless. I have tried to analyse my 'self'—my deepest self in order to discover if I can grasp its real nature. I have been longing for the day when the curtain that hides the 'Real' from my uncultured gaze could be lifted—so that I too could truly say what prophet Muhammad said, 'I have not seen a thing but have seen God in it.'

The higher one goes up on a mountain, says Ghazali, the farther one sees. Life is an uphill way: it is a continual fight against inertia, against sloth, against indolence. One must have faith to be able to carry on the struggle. So very difficult is the ordeal that so steadfast a lover of God as Christ could not help complaining on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me."

Who am I? Whence do I come? What am I here for? Whither do I go?

The answers to these questions, as Emerson teaches us, lie not in books that men write, but in life itself.

My life has been a ceaseless struggle to find an answer to these questions. Ever since I became aware of myself, and that was fairly long ago, I have meditated on these persistent problems of personal life. I have been grateful to those who have helped me to comprehend the mystery of death and significance of life: I have been equally grateful to those who have helped me to go forward on the way to my goal.

After a conscious struggle now extending over a period of 25 years I am eager to know if I am, in any way, nearer my goal . . .

Am I certain of anything that I should be able to answer for myself the questions I have now and then raised before my mind's eye? All intellectual advancement merely creates more questions without satisfactorily answering those that one is so worried about. Tormenting doubts haunt me whenever I begin to reflect upon the mystery of Creation. If I have been free from the clutches of this doubt, it has been in regard to only one cardinal belief: at no moment of my life do I remember having doubted the *unity* of Creation. It is my conviction that all that I perceive in the inner, as in the outer world, is really the manifestation of *one*, indivisible primordial reality. There is some supreme power, some cosmic will, some universal intelligence which seems to be eternally at work in this world of Creation. The whole world appears to me but evidence of the existence of this supreme power. In other words, there has been no moment in my life when I was not convinced of the reality of God, of His grace, of His justice and of His omnipotence. With me this belief is as old as my very life. My belief in God as a preserver of moral order, as a law-giver of this Universe is not the kind of belief which may be regarded in any sense, as being external to me. I cannot give up this belief even if I were to try to do so. It is as impossible for me to renounce this belief as it would be for me to get out of my own skin. If you could manage to deprive me of this belief, you might as well reduce me to a state of mere non-existence. This is so because my belief in God is co-extensive with the life I live. It is possible for me to live without clothes, without shelter, even for sometime without food, but it is not possible for me to live without faith. This belief, this faith in God has been the life-blood of my being, it is the corner-stone on which has been reared the whole structure of my moral, mental and spiritual life.

It is for that reason that I have not been able to understand those who argue about the ontological validity of this belief. All the arguments that have been adduced by philosophers either in support of or against the truth of this belief, appear to me, not so much logically insufficient and unsatisfactory, as thoroughly irrelevant and meaningless. The 'God' that I have worshipped cannot be proved by syllogistic reasoning nor in a manner in which you can prove a proposition of Euclid. God, at any rate for me, is the source of all that there is or can be. All existence is understandable by us only because it can be viewed as being grounded in Him; although what precisely that relationship is cannot be known in the present state of our consciousness. God is to the Universe what meaning is to the word in which it manifests itself. He is manifested in His creation and yet is independent of it. As the Holy Book teaches, "Your vision cannot comprehend Him but His Being comprehendeth everything that there is, so that He is aware of the minutest that there be". He is the meaning of all that there is and the perception of that meaning is not the function of the mere physical sense but is yielded adequately only by the direct sight of an inner eye, a faculty which, it is the destiny of man to evolve in himself before he casts away his earthly body.

From this belief inevitably follows a certain attitude which is characteristic of my life. It is difficult to describe what precisely is the hall-mark of this attitude. For want of better expression I would like to say that mine has been a life of longing, longing to get near Him and perchance to have a glimpse of Him. In practical parlance, reduced to terms of immediate earthly tasks, I interpret this demand of my being to mean no more and no less than this: that I should subordinate all my impulses, my emotions, and my desires, to the pursuit of one master-purpose of reflecting His will and His light in all that I do here below. For these very reasons, ever-since my childhood, I have never been in doubt as to the goal of my earthly existence. It is

my destiny not merely to affirm as a matter of faith, but to realise as a matter of direct experience that "*I am from Him and to Him is my return*". All heat and worry of life's long day, all suffering which is involved in my having to face all this earthly struggle, has a peculiar significance for me: regarded from my point of view it is the price I have to pay to reach my goal. Every day that dawns for me is just one more opportunity to serve Him and to fulfil His law—in fact, it is on that account that all renunciation gives me real joy. And this is so because I know that no sacrifice is too great when it is viewed as a means of acquiring an insight into the heart of things, or for gaining an approach to that source whence all Creation seems to borrow its power, its beauty and its appeal . . .

9

While thus musing over the silent graves of those whose earthly remains lie buried under the Mound of the Dead, the problem of my personal life acquired a new significance for me. I wish I could review the general course of my life in an attempt to recover for myself all those elements that have entered into the making of my mind. The original impulse, which constitutes the very stuff out of which my earthly consciousness has emerged, is no doubt an unanalysable whole: it is a fundamental mistake to regard the individuality of our inner life as something which might be explicable in terms of our experience: rather, it is that which makes all experience itself possible and confers individuality on all that we do. Of this original unacquired impulse how shall one speak? Like the human eye itself, alas ! it cannot see itself, although it sees everything else. Its individuality is so very unique that it cannot be interpreted in terms that may be easily intelligible to us. Through a special attempt it is, however, possible to have a peep into its hidden character. I have spoken about this aspect of the culture of human understanding a little earlier. At present I am only anxious, even at the risk of

repeating what I have said before, to say that the perception of this inner life in the sense just described is possible only after we have succeeded in changing ourselves. We have to transcend the limitations of our normal consciousness. As prisoners of this earthly consciousness, we are doomed to living in the night of darkness, to seeing only the shadows, and eternally debarred from having a peep into the nature of Reality. In the allegory of the cave, in Plato's Republic, Socrates symbolises this truth:

"And now, I said, let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened:—

"Behold! human beings living in an underground cave, which has a mouth open towards the light and reaching all along the cave: here they have been from their childhood, and have their legs and necks chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners there is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

"I see.

"And do you see, I said, men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, and statutes and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? . . .

"You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.

"Like ourselves, I replied; and they see only their own shadows, or the other shadows which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

"True, he said: how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?

"And on the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

"Yes, he said.

"To them, I said, the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images."

It is after we have *transformed* ourselves by changing the level of our life that we are in a position to command a view of that spiritual landscape which today is screened off from our gaze. Knowing is a function of being; the higher the being is, the farther one can see.

It is man's destiny that he should rise above himself. Does not Samuel Daniel say:

Unless above himself he can
Exalt himself, how poor a thing is Man.

It should be Man's endeavour to *renounce* the present state of consciousness in order that the Higher Powers may lift him from above and holding him aloft, give him a vision of things as they are. In the words of the poet, the prayer should be:

Create my soul anew,
Else all this worship's vain,
This wretched heart will never be true,
Until it is built again.
Descend, celestial fire
And seize me from above,
Melt me in flames of pure desire
A sacrifice to love.

It is undoubtedly true that nothing helps this process of transformation more than an assiduous pursuit of intellectual life: 'intellectual comprehension' itself helps the process of change by disclosing to us in advance the frame-work of the would-be experience. Not only that but by the powers of criticism, the rational mind is able to convince itself of the unreality of all that surrounds us here and now, and this, in turn, creates in us a desire to discover the higher truth.

About the higher consciousness—all I can say for the present is that it is different from the present consciousness in a radically marked way: the difference between this consciousness and the higher consciousness is the same as

between the states of consciousness as it is reflected in the state of sleep and wakefulness.

All factors that influence man's life are themselves the result of the reaction of his soul on the totality of environment. Children who are born in the same house and are subjected to identical domestic influences, nevertheless evolve in different directions. This proves that each one of us has certain native traits by reason of which we are able to react differently to identical situations. The decisive effect of some of the impressions and influences on the making of our personality is to be understood only from this perspective . . .

10

While sitting on the Buddhist stupa, I was naturally drawn into thinking about Gautama Buddha and his creed. I think humanity owes a deep debt of gratitude to one who, for the first time in the world of the Orient, focussed the attention of man on the all-important question of his personal salvation and deliverance. He did for India what Socrates did for the world of Greece—they both brought philosophy down from the clouds to the hearths and homes of men.

The scholars of early Buddhistic history are not unanimous about the dates of birth and death of Buddha, but there is overwhelming evidence in favour of placing his birth round about 540 B.C. and his death in about 480 B.C. His biography has been constructed on such scanty material as has been handed down to posterity by the early chroniclers of his mission and the account of his life is undoubtedly a mixture of very little history with a considerable amount of legend and myth. But those who wish to study the religious significance of his mission ought to concentrate more on the doctrine as it is accepted by Buddhist scholars themselves. After he had the illumination under the Bodhi tree, for full 44 years, he went about wandering and preaching: of course

during the monsoon he had perforce to stay at his favourite haunts where a band of his disciples would collect around him and receive the benefit of his teaching directly from the Master himself.

It was a measure of his greatness that he was impatient of all meaningless metaphysical questions—questions which had, in the age in which he came to redeem, become the stock-in-trade of those who were brought up in the creed of ancient Indian religious thought and practice. He refused point blank to answer these questions saying: I have come to deliver you from suffering, from sorrow and from pain. What matters it to you to know all that is implied in the solution of the problems of creation, of the reality of God, if you are not properly directed on just the one thing that counts, namely, your own escape from the wheel of life. 'If a man' says Buddha, 'were struck by a poisoned arrow and his friends and relatives called in a skilful Physician, what if the wounded man said : "I shall not allow my wound to be treated until I know who the man is by whom I have been wounded, whether he is a noble, a *Brahman*, a *Vaishya*, a *Sudra*—or if he said: "I know what they call the man who has wounded me, and of what family he is, whether he is tall or small or of middle stature and how his weapon was made with which he has struck me what would the end of the case be? The man would die of his wounds".

And so he set about admonishing people to practice righteousness in order to extricate themselves from the cycle of birth and death. His noble eightfold path is so well-known that there is no need to recapitulate it in any detail. The noble truths which constitute the basic principles of Buddhist philosophy as they have been expounded to us may, however, be briefly stated. They are—

(*a*) All that exists is subject to suffering.

(*b*) The suppression of suffering comes from the suppression of the desires.

(*c*) The origin of suffering is in human desires.

(*d*) The way which leads to that suppression is the noble eightfold path.

The path led the Master to peace, to knowledge, to illumination, to Nirvana—. This state of being, that is, of "deliverance" has been so very beautifully described by Sir Edwin Arnold in his immortal poem "Light of Asia"!

Many a house of life
Hath held me—seeking ever him who wrought
These prisons of the senses, sorrow-fraught;
Sore was my ceaseless strife!
But now,
Thou builder of this tabernacle—thou!
I know thee! never shalt thou build again
These walls of pain,
Nor raise the roof-tree of deceits, nor lay
Fresh rafters on the clay;
Broken thy house is, and the ridge-pole split
Delusion fashioned it !
Safe pass I thence—deliverance to obtain.

What the Master meant by Nirvana has been the subject-matter of a great deal of controversy: some believe that it is merely a negative expression indicative of a state of mind in which that pain, that sorrow, that suffering which our devotion to the first personal pronoun necessarily entails, ceases. Others, however, believe that it is something positive, that it is a state of man's Being where he rests in peace and contentment.

To Buddha goes the credit of not only delivering the individual from the menace of earthly suffering, but what is more, he is also responsible for delivering those that came to believe in him from the dogma of that body of ancient religious thought and teaching of which Brahmans of the day were the fanatical preservers and exclusive custodians. It is true that he denied the reality of the human soul, even of God and the life beyond the grave. He developed a System of psychology whereby he was able to demonstrate

that the stream of human consciousness is a mere succession of one impression following another, and that the existence of the 'I'—the first personal pronoun, which is the foundation of our notion of human personality as being something continuous,—is the result of an illusion. But all this denial was a historic necessity in order that Man's mind be more effectively directed on the practical task which was before him, namely, of his being able to fight the dogmatism, the formalism, the rigid ritualism of the day which had come to infest the pre-Buddhistic philosophico-religious teachings. I think Buddha did precisely that in Ancient India which Christ was to do four centuries later. Both of them had to wean men's mind away from the pursuit of selfish ends by emphasising the utter unreality of this life: both of them called man's attention to values other than those that had become the fashion of the day to applaud and to pursue.

As I sat musing over the Mound of the Dead, the last phase of its cultural formation, namely, the spread of Buddhism, appeared to me to correspond precisely to that experience that we have when soon after having seen the dazzling light of sun we behold its fading light at the hour of dusk. Buddhistic philosophy and thought, in my view makes on the Indian scene such a golden sun-set! Humanity saw the richness, the colour, and the pragmatic value of a creed so clear-cut as the sun itself, but which, nevertheless, soon after the passing over of the Master got refracted through the dusty atmosphere of dead tradition, pernicious prejudices and other evil forces of the day.

After the conclusion of Asoka's regime, Buddhism having lost its regal support completely disappeared from the Indian mainland, and sought refuge in Ceylon, Malaya, Burma, Japan and China: thus the seedling that originally had its birth on Indian soil was able to play a vital role only after it was transplanted on an alien soil. Brahmanic revival meant the disappearance of Buddhistic Religion. The Buddhist stupa on which I sat and lived through

those historic phases with which Indian history makes us familiar is but a symphony in ruins which till today articulates the existence of the creed of the last Buddha. There was to be thereafter a synthesis of the creed of Buddha and even of Christ, in the personality that was to find birth roughly a thousand years later in the desert of Arabia.

II

O' Spirit of silence, thy authority there is none to question; thy empire is vast and limitless; thy rule, eternal. All things emerge from thy womb and are at long last restored to thee, as if consigned to thy care.

Did not Goethe say:—

Over our heads the silent Stars
Under our feet the silent graves.

Thus surrounded by the omnipresent Spirit of Silence, the son of Man finds himself tightly wedged between the forces of life and death. And the tragedy of man's life is that, not infrequently, he becomes unmindful of his real place in the scheme of things. He then walks, proudly, defiantly and insolently, on earth—as though, he were here for no other purpose except to move the mountains, to shake the planet! Why cannot the proud and ignorant Man, realize his limits; learn to walk humbly on earth; tread gently and softly over the graves of his ancestors? This world is no place for the exhibition of man's pride: this is that Theatre of Time where the Voice of Silence perennially proclaims to Man the value of Humility. But will Man ever learn to listen to the Oracle of Silence?

Of old it hath been said, "All is vanity and vexation of the spirit." Vanity is the besetting sin of Human Nature. "All sensible people" says Somerset Maugham, "know that vanity is the most devastating, the most universal, the most ineradicable of all the passions that afflict the soul of man, and it is only vanity that makes him deny its power. It is more consuming than love. With advancing years, mercifully, you can snap your fingers at the terror and

servitude of love, but age cannot free you from the thraldom of vanity". It was for this very reason that Swift had said, "The strongest passion allows us some rest, but vanity keeps us perpetually in motion. 'What a dust do I raise', says the fly upon a coach wheel and 'at what a rate do I drive' says the fly on the horse back."...

As I rose to leave the Site of the Mound of the Dead I was more or less in the mood in which Job must have been when having renounced everything in his possession, even his health, he found himself firmly rooted in God's love—and realising His Power he "fell down and worshipped". Here are those soul-stiring words of the Bible in which Job's attitude to life is summed up:

"Then Job arose, and rent his mantle and shaved his head and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped,

"And said, naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord".

But not all who visit the Mound of the Dead experience this mood of humility. I myself saw some of the visitors to that place enjoying themselves, or as the phrase goes, having a good time; laughing, cutting jokes, discussing the latest political intrigue, the recent most social scandal. How is it possible, I said to myself, that anyone standing in this grave-yard of Silence, surrounded by these awful ruins, can be oblivious of those dismal thoughts that take possession of our soul whenever we contemplate the inevitable end of all things. But I was so soon reminded of the age old truth: there are some who have eyes but see not, have ears but hear not, have a heart but feel not . . .

God grant to man the seeing eye!

1953:

A key to the method and completeness of Plato is his twice-bisected line. After he has illustrated the relation between the absolute good and true, and the forms of the intelligible world, he says:—"Let there be a line cut in two unequal parts. Cut again each of these two parts—one representing the visible, the other the intelligible world—and these two new sections, representing the bright part and the dark part of these worlds, you will have, for one of the sections of the visible world—images, that is, both shadows and reflections; for the other section, the objects of these images—that is, plants, animals and the works of art and nature. Then divide the intelligible world in like manner; the one section will be of opinions and hypotheses, and the other section, of truths." To these four sections, the four operations of the soul correspond—conjecture, faith, understanding, reason. As every pool reflects the image of the sun, so every thought and thing restores us an image and creature of the supreme God. The universe is perforated by a million channels for his activity. All things mount and mount.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON.

* * * *

Man will at last be able to think "universally." His mechanical intelligence has come to the rescue of his moral intuition. He has gained centuries by eliminating space and time which separated him from the suffering of his brothers and erected isolating barriers all around him. His horizon is closer, his vision is enlarged, his heart is softened. His wonderful ingenuity will perhaps contribute to his true, cosmic evolution, the profound meaning of which he will some day grasp when he understands that he is at the same time its artisan and its beneficiary. For he now possesses the external means which will facilitate the internal effort required to tighten the bonds which make him one of the cells in that giant organism called humanity.

LE COMTE DU NOUY.

OUR KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXTERNAL WORLD.

1

If there is a problem which lies in the common *hinterland* of physiology, psychology, epistemology and metaphysics, it is that of comprehending the phenomenon of perception. The question, how we come to acquire knowledge of the external world is not at all a simple one and has, in fact, been the object of attention at the hands of almost every great philosopher. It has more particularly exercised the diligence and special industry of the philosophers of Europe. Down to this day, the question stands unsatisfactorily settled; and even so monumental a work as Professor L. T. Hobhouse's *Theory of Knowledge* does not give a convincing answer to the most momentous of all the questions that confronts philosophic thinking, namely: whether and if so, to what extent, we have the power to grasp in the 'knowledge relationship', the essential nature of Reality. Nor again is it clear that a satisfactory philosophical argument has as yet been offered to establish whether the picture we have of the external world in our minds is one which could be considered trustworthy.

2

To begin with, we cannot fail to notice the limits of what is described as the knowledge of the physical world as suggested to us even by the study of the extent to which the sense organs like eyes, ears, touch, smell can be trusted. If the senses are to serve as the gateways of knowledge, it is as well to determine how far these gateways are spacious enough to permit the sense impressions to reach the inner monitor in us without their being interfered or tampered

with by their own physiological constitution or the nature of their operations. We are undoubtedly limited by our body and of this we become acutely aware when we fall ill, or suffer from the loss of a limb, or forfeit the use of one or more of the five senses that act as the sentinels guarding the gateway of our knowledge.

Our capacity to come in direct contact with the world outside is limited in several ways. Our senses do not enable us to know all that there is to be known. The discovery of optical instruments, like the microscope and the telescope, has established beyond doubt the existence of a kind of 'sense data' which, by our unaided eye, we are not able to perceive. The poor quality of our visual perception becomes obvious when we take into consideration the enormous sectors of light energy that lie entirely inaccessible on the outer fringes of the spectrum unless the agency of the X-Ray intervenes. We now know that light as a phenomenon in nature is "a blend of the constituents of different wave-lengths". Its constituent elements as indicated by spectrosocopic examination furnish us with impressions which we interpret as colours ranging from red, blue, orange, yellow, green to violet. And although quite outside these limits all looks dark, it can be established that beyond both of these limits there is radiation of light which is invisible to our senses. The physicists have inferred the existence of *ultra red* heat radiation by placing a thermometer immediately above the visible red and noting the rise in the mercury column. Similarly, they have also proved the existence of *ultra violet* radiation and so on and so forth. The various experiments that have been carried on in regard to the total range of radiation prove that only one part out of the one thousand million million parts of that range is perceptible to us and this, as would be appreciated, is but an infinitesimal fraction of the entire range. The conclusion from this is that our eye, as an instrument of visual perception, is incapable of transmitting sensations other than those which it is able to capture, that

is, only those that are reflected in the pattern of rainbow colours. Similar investigations have been carried out by Physicists about the phenomenon of sound and these experiments also establish the conclusion that our ears can only capture a very small fraction of the total range of possible sense-impressions. "Our ears are sensitive", says Sir James Jeans, "only to the sounds the pitch of which lies within about ten octaves out of the infinite range which can occur in nature".

What our 'self' can therefore perceive from its bodily location in the scheme of things is only an artificially selected segment of possible sense-data. It is by continually shifting the location of our *psycho-physical* organism in space that we can acquire more and more of the sense impressions and thus reconstruct in thought the pictorial representation of nature which may enable us effectively to deal with our environment. The world, as it prefigures in our consciousness, is thus, in the first instance, a mental construction; and, in the second instance, its structure, as shaped by us in our consciousness, has to be understood as having been conditioned by the nature of the sense organs with which we have been endowed. The entire result of 'recreating the external world' in our consciousness is ultimately attributable to (*a*) our capacity to abstract artificially a small portion out of the manifold and rich texture of Reality and (*b*) to our power of generalising on the basis of this abstraction by inductive processes. No scientific statement about the world outside us, and no philosophic system which professes to account for its variegated aspects, can therefore possibly have any ontological validity, if by that is meant the proof that our thoughts reflect things as they are 'outside' our consciousness of them. All we are in a position to do is to discover if, within the 'thoughts' and 'things' as reflected in our experience of the external world, we can formulate a test by appeal to which we are in a position to sift 'truth' from 'error'. The progressive refinement of scientific instruments reveals to us the

existence of certain, entities or events in nature, which unaided by those instruments we could not have suspected as having existed. The existence of the planet Pluto, for example, was brought within the range of human consciousness only after the discovery of powerful telescopes. But assuredly it existed in its own right and independently of human consciousness even before that. The progressive enlargement of our powers of perception in the physical world indirectly suggests the existence of Reality which is not only independent of our psychological consciousness, but is far richer and vastly different from any image of it that we might succeed in recreating from our understanding of it.

3

In the knowledge relationship three elements must necessarily enter:—

(*a*) object to be known,

(*b*) the knower, *i.e.* subject of the knowledge-relationship and

(*c*) the mental activity involved in establishing a relationship between the two.

Whether or not the knowledge relationship in which the subject and the object of knowledge enter, is capable of yielding us reliable knowledge is itself incapable of being answered for the simple reason that, unless we know what objects are, apart from the knowledge relationship, we will not be able to pronounce any definite judgment on their objective character one way or the other. Human consciousness is necessarily involved in all knowledge relationships and such is the predicament in the knowledge relationship that, unless we knew what objects are in themselves, apart from that relationship, we will not be able to say how far the fact that objects are apprehended by our consciousness, modifies them. In the first place, there is the commonsense view that the objects that are lying about in the room where I am sitting, have been there before I came in and will continue to be there when I have withdrawn

myself from it. The existence of the moons of Jupiter that was revealed to Galileo when he looked at them through his telescope could not be attributed to the fact that he saw them. They must have existed before he saw them through his telescope.

The validity of this objection has been recognised by all those who contend that the essence of an object is that it be known. But what is suggested by them is that there is some extra-mental agency which must be invoked to account for the existence of such objects independently of the psychological consciousness of the individual. Bishop Berkley, it may be recalled, invoked the agency of God and attributed the existence of these objects to His knowledge of them. The votaries of objective idealism postulate the existence of the Absolute Consciousness and account for the independent existence of objects by an appeal to that all obliging philosophical concept. This type of explanation does not bring us nearer the solution, because the role which the Absolute plays in accounting for the objectivity or the independent existence of the external world is as good, or as bad, as the "thing-in-itself", postulated by Kant for the same purpose. The truth of the matter is that we have to postulate the existence of a trans-subjective world, otherwise it is impossible to explain the order observable in our own perception of the external world. The development of man's knowledge is consistent with this, and with the progressive evolution of our senses; and through the aid which they receive from instruments that are designed by man's intelligence, we are able to see more and more into the structure of the world. We should therefore be contented in limiting our knowledge *to what is revealed to us by our own consciousness* as it would be impossible and futile to answer questions which are beyond our experience.

"Knowledge of matter in terms of our own motor activities", says Dr Robert Briffault, "is perfectly correct, reliable and complete. Let us get rid of the superstition

that there is anything illusory or deceptive about it. The accuracy of our presentation of matter is the most readily and the most constantly verifiable knowledge we possess. That log of wood which appears to me as distant so many paces, of a certain size and form, of a certain rigidity and texture is exactly what appears to be; everyone of those impressions I can verify by going up to it, handling it, operating on it. Sensation may under certain circumstances be deceptive, as when I mistake a flat painted surface or a reflection or a solid body or estimate the size of the moon as less than that of the Peloponese; those are illusions because subsequent activity will not be consistent with those presentations formed from inadequate experience. But there is no illusion whatever in the normal presentation of matter for it quite accurately represents everything which it professes to represent."

Thus the test of accuracy of representation of the external world in our consciousness is one which could be formulated in terms of our experience. Accuracy of observation does not mean that we have verified our impression of an object with the object as it subsists outside human consciousness. That would be an impossible procedure. All we are entitled to claim is that the object is accurately observed in so for as it yields a constant impression even after repeated attempts to verify it have been made. The objectivity of man's knowledge is, in one sense, open to question because it is the fruit of, and therefore depends on, his own mental capacity and activity. But as communication between man and man shows, by and large, this capacity or activity of the mind appears to be the same in each one of us—and to that extent the common consciousness of mankind which is itself a social product does do justice to the objects it perceives. It is true, that there are individual variations in our capacities for observation and accurate representation of what we perceive, but then they are such as, once again, can be verified by appeal to fresh experience. But the very fact that we do talk to one

another and communicate our views about things that we see and observe shows that the subjective consciousness of each one of us is not a phenomenon to be condemned as being wholly relative to each one of us. Reflection shows that objects as perceived are the same for, and common to, all mankind.

Our perception of matter may, with advantage, be described as a representation of our potential actions. The primary experience in this behalf, of course, is the intuitive feeling caused by extra-mental factors; matter merely appears as an object of presentation, of picturing something which is not my feeling but merely a projection of possible action. Everything that we see in the external world has a definite form, definite qualities of resistance, texture, etc. But all these qualities revealed in our knowledge of 'matter' are mere projections in the service of our action—and action necessarily means bodily action initiated, or manipulated, by means of our organs. Our view of matter is the survey report for action. Its form is necessarily contingent on the nature of the selective interest with which life views it. Its character is bound to change if the quality of that selective interest which controls all operations of life and mind were itself to alter. Cognition is thus a mental operation which intervenes between the primary connative impulse of life to act on matter, and the accurate presentation of that matter in our consciousness in order that successful action can be carried out. Either cognition succeeds or it does not. In any case, where a failure is reported, a further attempt will be made to secure accurate representation of the matter in question and a renewed attempt made to deal with the situation. We have no other method of carrying on the task of earthly life and there is no other instrument by resort to which the objects of evolution can be advanced.

Our powers of cognition have been evolved by life to deal with the trans-subjective world of Reality, and their operation must always be comprehended in relation to that

very purpose for which life has called them into being. And, so judged, in my opinion, our powers of cognition are sufficiently trustworthy and can be relied upon for the fulfilment of the task which appears to have been assumed by life here below.

When we have a look at the world outside our bodily limits we see various objects directly; and we should not ordinarily suspect the reliability of our perception were it not for occasional misreportings by our cognitive faculties upon the faith of which action having been designed, life has had to suffer rude shocks and court failures. That black rope that you see at some distance away from you may be misreported as a result of the prejudicial operation of certain factors on the mechanism of perception. You may have heard stories about snakes in the locality and, perhaps, when you saw the rope you were emotionally agitated. As a result of the operation of that factor, your cognitive powers have been thrown off the track and have misreported a harmless rope as a venomous snake. Of course, at the time when you are mistakenly engaged in identifying this object in the external world as a snake, you are not even aware of the possibility of mistaking the identity of the object you are observing. But subsequent events may contradict the result of initial cognition, in which case, of course, in retrospect, you denounce it as being a false one. Senses do not lie because they do not judge. The error arises from the inadequate handling by us of the data impressed upon our sensibility.[1] It will be noticed that the development of cognition necessarily increases the chances of error: it is only by making a persistent effort that you can make the powers of your cognition sufficiently detached and impersonal so as to make their operations least liable to all those disturbing factors of which I have spoken already. Most of us, while walking with our feet firmly on the earth, are nevertheless not on it, in the sense that we are surrounded by a mental environment which habitually

distorts, thanks to the uncontrolled element of emotional disturbance which is continually upsetting the psycho-physical equilibrium, the impressions which the external world is trying to register upon us. Let it not be forgotten that even our body is a part of the external world and is seldom or never in a mood to cooperate with the our powers of cognition to reflect adequately on what is happening in the environment. How our "knowing self" is related to the body will never be known for the simple reason that the relationship itself is not the subject-matter of our cognition: this is so because it is not relevant to the forces of life to grasp its real nature, since it is not itself a relationship between any two external objects upon which action can be designed.

5

The emergence of conceptual knowledge is to be construed as an attempt by life to supplement and perfect the due discharge of those very functions for which our senses have been designed. Every idea, or thought, is itself an addition to the power of our senses and increases the natural reach of our personality. What our senses introduce to us, thanks to the advancement of the thought-life, is in turn elaborated by our cognitive powers. No body has yet seen the centre of the earth: but nevertheless, by our knowledge that the earth is a sphere, we know that it has a centre which exists, irrespective of the fact whether or not it has been seen. Has not therefore our idea of the spherical character of the earth extended our power of perception, precisely in the manner in which the discovery of X-Ray has added to the powers of our perception? You could proceed to act upon the supposition that the earth has a centre as validly as though you had determined its location by visual perception. The progressive evolution of the thought-life is thus, in effect, a progressive refinement of the powers of our perception. And, in fact, the world of the unseen is thus believed to be as real as the world which is revealed

to us by our five senses. The unseen world is not any "other" world but is a mode of regarding the world which is introduced to us by our senses; and, in fact, ninety nine per cent. of our life's operations have a direct dealing with the unseen world and, in some sense, it is really *the* world in which we live, move and have our being. In fact its existence is what renders our perception of our physical world possible. Let us recall what Kant used to say on this aspect of our study: "Concepts without percepts, are *empty* and percepts without concepts are blind." It is the interaction between the two, in their *blend* or marriage, that the intelligible world arises for our powers of cognition to contemplate and enjoy. On this aspect of the problem I would like to quote a passage from William James.

"... Remember those passages from Emerson which I read at my last lecture. The whole universe of concrete objects, as we know them, swims, not only for such transcendentalist writer, but for all of us, in a wider and higher universe of abstract ideas, that lend it its significance. As time, space, and ether soak through all things so (we feel) do abstract and essential goodness, beauty, strength, significance, justice, soak through all things good, strong, significant, and just.

"Such ideas, and others equally abstract, from the background for all our facts, the fountain-head of all the possibilities we conceive of. They give its 'nature', as we call it, to every special thing. Everything we know is 'what' it is by sharing in the nature of one of these abstractions. We can never look directly at them, for they are bodiless and featureless and footless, but we grasp all other things by their means, and in handling the real world we should be stricken with helplessness in just so far forth as we might lose these mental objects, these adjectives and adverbs and predicates and heads of classification and conception.

"This absolute determinability of our mind by abstrac-

tions is one of the cardinal facts in our human constitution. Polarizing and magnetizing us as they do, we turn towards them and from them, we seek them, hold them, hate them, bless them, just as if they were so many concrete beings. And beings they are, beings as real in the realm which they inhabit as the changing things of sense are in the realm of space."

The belief in the unseen is not thus something which is a matter of option, or of choice, for the human mind. You cannot name a single human action which can be comprehended except by *seeing* its ramifications reach into the world of the unseen. The very morsel you take from your daily food and put in your mouth involves the assumption that you *perceived* directly the *result* that it will satisfy your hunger and furnish energy for the upkeep and maintenance of your physical life. Except on some such assumption, it is difficult to explain why you should have anything to do with the food you are otherwise so eager to take. It is no argument against this view to contend that from our past experience we know that the intake of food contributes to the maintenance of bodily life; for, from the nature of the case, the experience under reference having passed away *is not anything that is there to be perceived in the active present* and your memory and imagination are afterall mere terms employed to explain the miracle of your cognitive powers, of *seeing* something which is not there.? I have taken an extreme case for the purpose of defending what appears to me to be a matter beyond dispute: namely, *that the Reality of the unseen is an integral part of the visible world and, in fact, is more highly relevant for the purposes of life than even the latter.*

6

Some people, by their very mode of regarding this world, give evidence of the fact that they perceive the existence of a Higher Power, they call God. With them the question about the proof of the existence of God does not so much as arise; for just as in the physical world

seeing is believing, in the mental world, believing is seeing. And belief is after all a mode of our reaction to the "not-self" in order that successful action can be planned and executed, and this reaction is based not only on what one sees immediately, near at hand, but is, in a considerable measure, influenced by the projection of what one observes in the world of the unseen. A farmer who works hard may be adjudged differently according as we construe his acts as limited by the mere immediacy of life, or, we view them as a part of a wider setting. Such a farmer may be reproached for "living laborious days and scorning delight", if you were to take the meaning of his activity as being exhausted in the immediate present; but you would, I am sure, call him a man of foresight and wisdom if you viewed it in relation to the larger context, the context of his entire life, or the context of the life of mankind at large to which, by means of the hard work he is putting forth, he is anxious to make a contribution. In fact, the progressive evolution of human life both in its moral and intellectual sphere consists in rising above the immediacy of circumstances; of listening to what *ages* say against the *hours*; of contemplating the "fleeting shadows" under the sovereign authority of the Eternal. And so Emerson says in his essay on "Montaigne":—

"The expansive nature of truth comes to our succour, elastic, not to be surrounded. Man helps himself by larger generalisations. The lesson of life is practically to generalise; to believe what the years and the centuries say against the hours; to resist the usurpation of particulars; to penetrate to their catholic sense. Things seem to say one thing, and say the reverse. The appearance is immoral; the result is moral. Things seem to tend downwards, to justify despondency, to promote rogues, to defeat the just; and, by knaves, as by martyrs, the just cause is carried forward. Although knaves win in every political struggle, although society seems to be delivered over from the hands of one set of criminals into the hands of another set of criminals, as fast as the government is changed, and the march of civilisation

is a train of felonies, yet, general ends are somehow answered. We see, now, events forced on, which seem to retard or retrograde the civility of ages. But the world-spirit is a good swimmer, and storms and waves cannot drown him. He snaps his finger at laws: and so, throughout history, heaven seems to affect low and poor means. Through the years and the centuries, through evil agents, through toys and atoms a great and beneficent tendency irresistibly streams."

He proceeds further to advise:

"Let a man learn to look for the permanent in the mutable and fleeting; let him learn to bear the disappearance of things he was wont to reverence, without losing his reverence; let him learn that he is here, not to work, but to be worked upon; and that, though abyss open under abyss, and opinion displace opinion, all are at last contained in the Eternal Cause.—

"If my bark sink, 'tis to another sea."

Emerson's admonition, "Let a man learn to look for the permanent in the mutable and fleeting" implies belief in one of the two things: that either behind the veil of the mutable and the fleeting shadows lies the unchanging, the abiding, the Eternal Reality; or, that the permanent is not 'there' in the 'external concourse of things,' but that it is really to be projected into it as a man's own contribution. And that reminds one of the age-old war between nominalism and realism. The nominalists say that all the general ideas that we have are just mere names and they have no reality of their own; the realists, on the other hand, contend, that they subsist in their own right and are cognized by the mind much in the manner with which it cognizes objects of the physical world. The first school of thought says that general ideas are abstracted from individual objects and rolled up together under one name. The realists, of course, argue that far from deriving these ideas from the objects of the physical world, it is these individual objects in the physical world that are rendered intelligible by reason of their

participation in the ideas which subsist in their own right. The ideas are as objective as anything can be for the human mind; mind does not *create* them, but upon these being suggested by the individual objects in the physical world, our soul reminds us of them. If it did not know them *a priori* nothing in the physical world would succeed in suggesting them to us. The progress of the thought-life is conceived to be an increasing awareness of these independent trans-subjective entities. The very fact that people agree in the perception they have of these ideas shows that they are as real as is the physical world outside—nay, it is the physical world outside the mind which participates in their nature and obtains by that very act of participation a character of intelligibility.

Which one of these schools of thought represents the ultimate truth? I believe it is impossible to answer this question satisfactorily. Before you can declare either of these view-points valid you ought to be able to get out of the knowledge predicament itself: in other words, to get out of the human condition and attain a state of being by which you are able to survey the physical and the mental world as if from a point of view outside both of them and yet comprehending them as though they were the two focal points of an all embracing eclipse.

Plato, it would be recalled, assigned to "ideas" an independent existence and, in fact, saw them occupying a well defined status in the hierarchy of ideas—starting with the base you go up to the apex of the pyramid of ideas where crowning all, sits the Idea of the Good. "All things," he says, "are for the sake of the good and it is the cause of everything beautiful." For Plato, the idea of 'beauty' exists in its own right and is a perfectly individual entity of which we are aware as of something "additional to all the perishing beauties of earth". In his cosmology we are introduced to his theory of man's creation, of how the soul in us which was in 'contact' with this world of ideas has got encased in the shadows and perishable entities of the

physical world and has forgotten all about its original home. What the 'soul' sees in the physical world by way of beauty is only a dull image of what it saw of it in the fullness of glory before it was born. Knowledge thus becomes recollection of what man has seen once before—but which he has subsequently forgotten. The function of education is to enable us to recover this lost heritage. The objects of the physical world serve as sign-posts indicative of man's higher destiny, and by assiduous thinking, reasoning and contemplation he is helped to get back, in thought at least, to his familiar home. Plato regards the world of ideas with a sort of mystical reverence amounting to worship. My favourite philosopher, Keyserling, while talking of the Platonic theory of ideas in his "Travel Diary of a Philosopher" makes very thought-provoking observations. He says,—

"Just as every one can let his spirit roam in the external world, which can be perceptible by the senses, the realm which appears as a fixed actuality, it is also possible to wander about in the world of mental images when the mind has been 'stilled', when the imagination, the 'intoxicated monkey,' has learnt to be quiescent, and to survey one's concepts as calmly as one surveys trees. And if one learns, moreover, not to transpose the ideas just formed into thoughts and concepts immediately, but to hold them fast as such, then one experiences what suggested to Plato his doctrine of ideas. But the world of ideas does not signify the highest stage: high above it towers the domain of pure significance, and he who dwells there continuously may well be omniscient . . . I need hardly assert specifically that I did not get so far. I have, however, frequently gone through the same experience as Plato: I have surveyed ideas like objects. During such periods I perceived their connection, their origin, their meaning; I did not have to think; and sometimes I succeeded literally in getting behind and round them. I practised the power which philosophers, from Plotinus to Schelling, have so inaptly described as 'intellectual contemplation' (it is not intellectual, but just

as empirical as any other, only from a different plane of consciousness). I perceived directly what is otherwise only deduced indirectly."

7

And finally, what is the theory in terms of which we must account for the manner in which the 'self' enters into a knowledge-relationship with the world around it? Does it *create*, as does the spider the web it weaves, as if all out of itself? Or, does it *participate* in this creation by contributing as its quota, the eternal and immutable to what is changing and fleeting? Or, is it, once again, that it neither *creates* nor helps in the creation of what it perceives, but only that the mind *reveals* something which lay in darkness before, much in the manner in which, with a lighted torch we see those portions of our environment which in the absence of light we are not able to see.? I would declare my own preference for the theory which suggests that we only *participate* in the creation of that which we know, act like the Bee that sucks 'honey' out of flowers. Our mind supplies the masculine principle in the creative process. In the absence of the 'feminine principle of passivity' furnished by matter, we would not, in my opinion, be able to create anything. It is only God who creates by the mere act of 'willing', but man, his vicergent on earth, is limited to creating his own image only out of that which is outside him.

From the cosmic perspective of course, the problem of knowledge need not be solved because *ex-hypothesi* such a problem at that plane does not exist. The reach of Man's knowledge is confined to the 'subject and object relationship'. It is in that context that human cognitive *consciousness* plays a part. From "God's point of view," since there is nothing outside Him, there is nothing to be known, because he is aware of himself in his own activity in a feeling of immediacy and directness which cannot even be described in human language. It may ultimately be

that the Divine spark in man shares this power with His Maker—but the essential thing to remember is that he shares it only partially in his condition of finitude. The whole universe is to be cognized by man much in the manner in which, by a progressive series in fractions, we may be endeavouring to realize an integer. Just as in the series 1/2, 1/3, 1/4 and so on, we increasingly tend to approximate to a condition which is symbolised by zero, but nevertheless, no matter howsoever much the process is prolonged we cannot reach it; so also Man, as a servant of the Higher Power, is gifted only to realize in *time sequence approximations to Universal Truth*; but, from the nature of the case, so long as his condition of servitude is one which he cannot get over, he cannot fully reflect the Universal Power and glory. This, probably, is why Plato regarded "Time" as "the moving image of eternity". We, who are in the midst of the flowing stream of time, cannot survey all that there is to be surveyed by stepping out of the stream of time. We have vague, but nevertheless suficiently reliable, intuitive feeling that it would be possible to survey the ever-moving, the ever-flowing stream of time, from a non-temporal perspective; but let us remember, that it is not possible to translate that feeling into language which can be easily understood. The moment one gets out of the current of time one ceases to occupy the human condition; and then although one might be graced with vision, what is essential to note is that one is incapable of conveying adequately these truths in the framework of human knowledge which, as I have said before, has been evolved only to deal with 'subject and object relationship'—in order that successful action be designed by life in its dealings with matter.

8

The problem of human knowledge as it presents itself to me, and the lines along which its solution might be sought, has been stated by me in as few words as I possibly

could. But, I think, unless I give some account of the manner in which some of the well-known philosophers of Europe have tackled this problem, it would not be possible to expect a proper understanding of the precise difference in the view-point with which I have looked at it. My own philosophic attitude on this question has, to a considerable extent, been influenced by the writings of Pringle-Pattison; and I will now proceed to outline the case for "Critical Realism" more or less in the way if not in the very words in which it has been stated by him.

If we critically approach, says this philospher, the writings of modern philosophers, we find that much confusion and controversy has been created mainly by the mixing up of psychological, epistemological and metaphysical questions: the source of misunderstanding can be traced to the unconscious shifting of philosophical speculation, from one point of view to another, and this charge can be hurled against Locke, Berkeley and Hume. Strenuous efforts, therefore, have to be made to differentiate the various points of view and, at the same time, to discriminate between the kind of attitude to the problem of knowledge which ought necessarily to belong to a psychologist, an epistemologist and a metaphysician.

Put simply, the problem of psychology is to study the consciousness of an individual and explain how that consciousness develops from rudimentary beginnings—say the consciousness that is to be found in the animal or in the child mind. The psychologist, in this connection, has to explain the phenomenon of mental operations; for instance, he has to study the nature of instinct, intelligence and will. He has to analyse the complex pattern of the mechanism of our knowledge and show how it is that we come to develop and exploit our powers of perception, recall, and imagination in the building of our knowledge of the external world. He has to trace the line of our mental growth from sensation upwards to the level at which highly complicated ideational processes take place.

A psychologist, in an attempt to account for the fact of our knowledge, must *assume* that the external world exists—for that is the approach on which the commonsense of mankind is based. At any rate, the external world *appears* to exist and that by itself is a sufficient justification for psychology to *assume* it to exist. Just as a physicist starts with the assumption that space and time exist and then proceeds to deal with the physical world in an attempt to understand its laws of behaviour, so also the psychologist must assume that the world of external objects exists, and then proceed to explain how we come to reflect it in our consciousness.

Epistemology is a science which also investigates the problem of knowledge, but that in quite a different sense; and its exclusive concern is with the task, as it were, of going out from the psychological field of the individual consciousness, to the extra-mental reality, with which the knowledge of the individual has apparently some relationship. It speaks of the *validity* of knowledge; it enquires, also how knowledge of the external world is possible; it tries to answer the question: what is truth and what is error.

Let us distinguish the psychological problem which, as we have said, consists only in the study of the processes in the individual mind from the problem of epistemology, which, as we have said, mainly relates to the task of discovering whether or not there is a reality outside the self, and if there is any, whether the knowledge of it, which the individual comes to acquire, is true or false knowledge. Epistemology examines the nature of mental processes in relation to a reality beyond the contents of individual consciousness. Whereas psychology deals with ideas as mental facts which have an existence of their own in our consciousness, an epistemologist studies them as instruments which lead us to a reality beyond their own. A psychologist is, at the most, concerned with the task of studying the *nature of mental processes* in relation to a reality beyond the

contents of individual consciousness. For an epistemologist the questions are: are the ideas we have copies of the objects outside the mind, or are they mere effects of a cause which operates on our mind from outside its frontiers? Or are they mere pointers, symbols, or sign-posts that suggest but very imperfectly the fact *that* there is something outside the mind without in the least informing us as to *what* its real nature is? A psychologist is, at the most, concerned with the task of studying the nature of belief in the external world and the psychological processes involved in the development of this belief; but an epistemologist examines the *grounds* of this belief, and while undertaking to do so, he comes to regard the reality of ideas not psychologically but epistemologically: that is, he regards them in their representative capacity, as effects of an extra-mental reality, or as its images or as powerful instruments with the help of which the self acquires an intimation of a world beyond its subjective field of consciousness.

In accordance with what has been said so far, epistemology may conveniently be defined as a science which deals with the problem of knowledge in the trans-subjective sense. Ostensibly an epistemologist does something more, and that also in a different sense, with the ideas, than what is done by the psychologist who merely explains them subjectively, in relation to the cognitive operations of the human mind, quite apart from any critical examination of the validity of the knowledge resulting from the acquisition of those ideas.

It might be objected that this way of putting the matter may be said to beg the whole question that is at issue between the schools of thought which go by the names of idealism and realism, inasmuch as it can be contended, that the former school denies, or at least seems to deny, the existence of any extra-subjective or extra-experiential reality. We all know what idealism consists in: epistemologically, it is a doctrine which says that reality is no other than the experience of the mind, which consists in ideas,

and that the stuff of which the universe is made, is something mental and something which is the aggregate of ideas which the universal self has of its own playful activity. The cardinal principle of Idealism is that it insists upon the priority of cognitive consciousness over everything else. The realist, on the other hand, assigns to the human mind a humble role, a role wherein the human mind is likened to a torch revealing to itself a certain section of reality. According to the realist, reality subsists in its own right and is independent of the human mind. The realists far from saying that the external world does not exist except in some mind, (whether that mind be construed transcendentally or psychologically makes no difference) go a step further and say that the *knowledge situation is one in which mind plays the part of the discoverer of the contents of knowledge, and does not create them.* In the words of R. B. Perry, the famous American Philosopher, "Whether it be the execution of a policy, the determination of the price of commodity or the investigation of the properties of non-Euclidean space, knowing is always a phase of life, of action in an environment, projected on particular occasions, tried with particular means, and ended with success or failure."

It may be contended that we start with a prejudice in favour of the existence of the external world and then say that epistemology is a science that deals with the relationship which the psychological self has with the extra-mental and external world. But, if we investigate the logical foundation of this contention, we shall come to the conclusion that the objection is misconceived, and does not bear much criticism; for this much at least is clear, that even the trans-subjective world which we presuppose in positing our problem, *seems to exist*, if actually, its existence be denied by idealism.

What cannot be denied is that, at least, it appears to exist; and any idealistic theory which denies outright the independent existence of the external world has the burden cast on it of explaining how we come to have the illusion

that such a world, as the one that seems to exist, exists. It is the duty of every idealistic philosopher to explain to us why, in his opinion, the appearance of the external world must be considered illusory: as something that is not real, and something that has no independent existence of its own. That is how, for example, a disciple of John Stuart Mill might defend the position of his master who, it may be recalled, defined reality as a permanent possibility of sensations. He may, says Pringle-Pattison, avoid the acknowledgment of this reference of present consciousness beyond itself *by saying that it does not carry us beyond the consciousness altogether*: he will thereby convey the impression that the reality to which this mental state refers is yet within the consciousness itself. Now this may, as a *matter of fact*, not be true; *still* it explains the illusion inasmuch as it offers some sort of explanation as to the nature of the external world and how the illusion of its reality arises. So that the claims of epistemology as a science cannot possibly be avoided. This science must assume that the belief in the psychological field which we all have of the independent existence of the external world, is a belief that is not without foundation, and is a belief which has been conditioned by the independent existence of the external world; and all that then can be done by an espistemologist is to explain the grounds of that belief; and in doing so he may either come to a position that such an external world exists, or he may come to the conclusion that our belief in the existence of the external world is *no better than a subjective illusion*.

Now then, finally, we must say that the function of the epistemologist in essence is *to deal with the knowledge relationship*, from only one point of view, that is, *to investigate its validity, its truth*; to show the right we have to pass beyond the subjective state. It examines the grounds of our belief in the existence of the independent external world. It does not, in other words, like psychology, rest on appearances alone. Is there any reality beyond our consciousness, and if there is, in what way do we know of it? This is the

problem which it seeks to solve.

8

We have examined the relationship of the psychological point of view to the epistemological one, and it now remains for us to formulate precisely the relationship which these two points of view bear to the problem of metaphysics. Unless epistemological studies assure us that there is such a thing as the external world of men and things, until and unless the epistemologist can give us the fruit of his study, and extend to us his conviction of the existence of the external world, *no metaphysics can be possible.* I say, "no metaphysics is possible" for the simple reason that a consistent subjectivist must accept the position that what appears is real. Unless such a thorough-going solipsist were to say that he proposes to study *how the knowing self is related to the ideas it has*, he has not left for himself any real metaphysical problem to tackle. The notion of self for such a subjectivist can be open to the criticism that even the *self* can be known as an *idea* and apart from the idea of it, it has no other reality which might subsist independently of that idea. Thus the whole world of experience would be reduced to ideas—with the rider that they are not the ideas of anybody, much less have they any reference to any extra-subjective factors. Thus it is that if the epistemological conclusions deny the validity of our belief in the independent external world, the question of the possibility of metaphysics comes to an end. That is why it has been rightly remarked, '*scepticism in epistemology means the denial of the possibility of metaphysics.*'

But in those cases where epistemologists do establish, through the process of reasoning based on the findings of sciences like physiology and physics and analysis of the knowledge relationship which the individual mind has with the external world the conclusion that such a world exists, the work of the metaphysician must be considered to have begun; the task then to be undertaken is to

find out *finally what is the essence of the knower and the known*; and to see whether they are aspects of one and the same metaphysical reality, or whether they are things poles apart and in no sense merge in a metaphysical oneness. As indicated earlier, we can say that metaphysics among other problems has to deal with the ultimate nature of reality which reveals itself both in the consciousness which knows and the world which is known. There are terms like 'idea,' 'phenomenon,' 'thing-in-itself,' which are employed by the epistemologist to study the various aspects of the cognitive relationship which the human mind enters into with the objects of the external world. The metaphysician also studies the problem of the 'thing-in-itself,' but in another and a totally different sense; with him the problem solely consists in giving an answer to the question, "What is the nature of ultimate reality? Is it one? Or has it the character of duality or plurality?"

Unfortunately, so common a word as 'idealism' has at times been used epistemologically, in which case it has been understood in direct opposition to realism; and, at times it has been used ontologically when it is to be contrasted with materialism. The difference between epistemological idealism and realism is not a difference regarding the ultimate nature or constitution of the universe, but one of the theory of knowledge, of the question of the existence of the external world and not of the *nature* of the existence we are prepared to assign to it. Has it any existence beyond the minds of the conscious beings who perceive it, or is the perception of it the whole of its essence? While deciding this issue, it will be noticed that, we are dealing with different sets of problems that are incidental to the undertakings of epistemology and ontology respectively. It is equally clear that metaphysical idealism is not compatible with epistemological idealism. Bishop Berkeley, for instance, is considered a subjective idealist in the epistemological sense and also a metaphysical idealist. Yet he was not a consistent subjectivist. He affirmed the trans-

subjective reference of at least one type of reality, namely, *God.* Consistent epistemological idealism can only mean solipsism. It is Hume, and not Berkeley, who typifies solipsism. *Let us then generalise*: when epistemological idealism escapes scepticism, be assured that it has given acknowledgment indirectly to some realistic elements, which, could they but be made explicit, would exhibit the inconsistency of the theory. It is only in epistemological realism that we can avoid subjectivism and scepticism, and then begin our adventure towards establishing metaphysical idealism.

Pringle-Pattison, whose views on these questions I have attempted to reproduce above, admonishes us to keep the two sides of the question distinctly apart: many English thinkers who profess allegiance to Kant and Hegel, he complains, constantly shift from one point of view to another and so confuse the whole issue. The Neo-Hegeleans convey the impression that, in order to reach metaphysical idealism, the reality of the thing-in-itself must be denied. What is important to note is that it is not the epistemological thing-in-itself that is to be denied; by doing so one would be defeating the very function of knowledge. What is to be denied is the metaphysical thing-in-itself, for denial of that would mean that the external world is not to be taken as an independent fact existing on its own account, but as only being incidentally related to the rest of the Universe. The two sets of problems are different and are not to be confused. Our epistemological conclusions relate to the individual consciousness and the relationship which that consciousness has to the external world. And so a follower of Hegel is not justified in denying the epistemological thing-in-itself. It is no valid rejoinder on his part to say that we are not talking of *our* own consciousness, but of the so-called divine consciousness, for the comprehension of the Divine Consciousness is not, as human consciousness certainly is, the real question for epistemology. According to Hegel, the ultimate Reality

of Universal Thought manifests itself alike both in the subjective and objective order. Hence this metaphysical identity tempts Hegel and his disciples to forget the epistemological problem; but the identity in essence should not blind us to the real epistemological dualism, which subsists between the knower and the known. If that is the mistake of Hegelianism, the opposite is the mistake in the philosophies of Reid and Hamilton. They start with epistemological dualism and seem to get involved in great confusion; the confusion arises for them essentially because they think that this epistemological dualism prevents them from arriving at a metaphysical monism. It is clear that in either case the approach is fallacious. "Dualism of knowledge, is no more proof of a metaphysical duality than identity of metaphysical essence is proof of the elimination of the epistemological problem."

9

The problem of epistemology arises from the very nature of knowledge. Knowledge implies reference to that which is known. A Neo-Idealist will deny that this reference is there. This is true of self-knowledge also. Knowledge is a subjective process; one being or individual cannot go out of himself, he can know things by report, only by their effects upon him. This then is the crux of the problem. Knowledge is a subjective process, but as it is said, it also implies *an objective reference.* If it is not an illusion altogether, it is a knowledge of trans-subjective reality. But all through the modern period, philosophers have been turning the subjectivity of knowledge against the objectivity of its reference and, in the last resort, they have even succeeded in converting the very notion of knowledge into an argument against the possibility of knowledge. But, as is obvious, this difficulty or this delusion, call it what you like, is a self-created one, and is in its very nature created by those who misunderstand the function of knowledge. If we start by considering our view of

a layman's perception, there can be no doubt that it reveals to us a world which is somehow external to the thinking 'self' in us. This is what induces us to accept the incontestable priority of realism as an epistemological doctrine. When the philosophical doctrine supervenes and subjects this instinctive view of our own to a thorough investigation, this primitive and simple view is found to be wanting, since it cannot explain the problem of error. The criticism which is to be made against this layman's view of perception is ultimately *based on the ground that if the mind is directly in contact with the external world, how can error in its perception at all arise?* Moreover, the mere instinctive belief in the directness of perception by the mind, as to the independent existence of the external world, is no argument in favour of its authenticity. Idealism as a theory of knowledge consequently owes its orientation to an attempt to correct the view of naive Realism, and derives its plausibility from 'some unobserved importation of realistic assumptions.' Were it not for these assumptions, idealism as a theory could not even be stated in words. If we begin by criticising the layman's view of perception, in order to make it a view which can also explain the difference between truth and error in the knowledge relationship, we have necessarily to adopt a view of the nature and working of the human mind which differs very much from that held by the layman. The gist of this theory is that knowledge is a separate *act*, and is an act which does not create the thing known, and that anything which is known to different observers is a fact quite independent of the consciousness of each observer. The arguments by which idealism is enforced are drawn from the physiology of sense organs; the general position being that psychological knowledge has for its immediate conditions certain processes and consists of certain subjective experiences. So Hume says, "We never have immediate intercourse between mind and its objects. Consciousness is shut up to its own contents."

Now, analysis of the knowing process reveals two main

factors: (1) the act of knowledge and (2) the object known. This distinction between the act and the content of knowing is undeniable. The distinction is involved in the very nature of knowledge. Knowledge is not an entity stretching across, as it were, from subject to object. Knowledge, if it is anything at all, *is an activity*, an active experience of a subject, in which it becomes aware of what is not itself. The cognitive state is thus psychologically related to the conscious subject whose experience it is, and epistemologically to the object of which it is the knowledge. Both subject and object are members of the same world. This may be taken as an unavoidable presupposition of all sound philosophy. And their very separation and difference are the conditions of knowledge; in other words, if they were not separate somethings, there would not be any problem of knowledge. But let us not forget that knowledge is not a fusion of the knower and the known, nor can it be regarded as having immediate contact between the knowing subject and the known object. All knowledge is mediate. Physical remoteness or nearness does not affect the epistemological question. The paper on which I write is no doubt in immediate physical contact with my body, but it is as much outside the domain of my consciousness as is the most distant star. There is the inner world and the outer world: ontologically they may be one, aspects of a single whole; but epistemologically they must be regarded as two opposite poles of the knowledge relationship. If metaphysically the two worlds were exclusive, no member of the one could intrude upon the field of the other. The moment these difficulties are recognized, realism in the naive form must be given up and the knowledge situation must be defined anew to give due recognition to the truth of idealistic criticism. The knowledge we call immediate is knowledge that is really mediate. Knowledge puts a man in contact with things through perception, but his perceptions are not the things he perceives. He does not pass over to things, nor do things pass over to him. We thus reach a

stage of philosophical theory which may easily be called "Empirical Realism" and "Transcendal Idealism" after the Kantian model. We do, in effect, acknowledge that there is a fundamental difference between the mental *act* and the contents of the *mind*.

10

Now, transcendence of the real, says Pringle-Pattison, from the specific sphere of subjectivity does not give scepticism its opportunity. It is this gap in the nature of the knowledge process between the subject and the object which scepticism or agnosticism exploits. So long as the knower and the known are not identical, there is a possibility of knowledge being untrue. Hence in the history of philosophy, a series of attempts have been made to dispense with the otherness or the transcendence of the object known. This sceptical result which we see in the philosophy of Locke, is largely due to his inability to explain to himself how the mind at all comes to know its ideas when the subject and the object in the knowledge relationship are distinct and different. Accordingly, it will be seen that in order to explain the possibility of the passage from the subject to the object, we have necessarily to *believe* in the metaphysical oneness of the world and regard man as a creature who is of the world he inhabits and not as a creature who has fallen into this world from outside and who, therefore, is unable to appreciate in the knowledge relationship the objective order which the external world brings him into constant contact with...

And so I might close with a quotation from Emerson who puts the whole point far more effectively than I have been able to do:—

"The possibility of interpretation lies in the identity of the observer with the observed. Each material thing has its celestial side; has its translation, through humanity, into the spiritual and necessary sphere, where it plays a part as indestructible as any other. And to these, their ends, all

things continually ascend. The gases gather to the solid firmament; the chemic lump arrives at the plant, and grows; arrives at the quadruped, and walks; arrives at the man, and things. But also the constituency determines the vote of the representative. He is not only representative, but participant. Like can only be known by like. The reason why he knows about them is, that he is of them; he has just come out of nature, or from being a part of that thing. Animated chlorine knows of chlorine, and incarnate zinc, of zinc. Their quality makes his career; and he can variously publish their virtues, because they compose him. Man, made of the dust of the world, does not forget his origin; and all that is yet inanimate will one day speak and reason. Unpublished nature will have its whole secret told."

1942—
(A paper read before Students of Philosophy)

But man, proud man
Drest in a little brief authority—
Most ignorant of what he is most assur'd
His glassy essence—like an angry ape
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep.

SHAKESPEARE.

* * * *

We are products of the past and we live immersed in the past, which encompasses us. How can we move towards the new life, how create new activities without getting out of the past and without placing ourselves above it? And how can we place ourselves above the past if we are in it and it is in us? There is no other way out except through thought, which does not break off relations with the past but rises ideally above it and converts it into knowledge. The past must be faced or, not to speak in metaphors, it must be reduced to a mental problem which can find its solution in a proposition of truth, the ideal premise for our new activity and our new life. This is how we daily behave, when, instead of being prostrated by the vexations which beset us, and of bewailing and being shamed by errors we have committed, we examine what has happened, analyse its origin, follow its history, and with an informed conscience and under an intimate inspiration, we outline what ought and should be undertaken and willingly and brightly get ready to undertake it. Humanity always behaves in the same way when faced with its great and varied past. The writing of histories—as Goethe once noted—is one way of getting rid of the weight of the past. Historical thought transforms it into its own material and transfigures it into its object, and the writing of history liberates us from history.

BENEDETTO CROCE.

* * * *

History seeks to comprehend the being of the present by regarding it as a becoming of the past.

EDWARD MEYER.

THE IDEA AS A HISTORIC FORCE

I

The phenomenon of historical change, no matter how conceived, whether as a movement, development or evolution, has received at the hands of the philosophers of history diverse interpretations. There are some who trace all historical change or, as a matter of fact, any change in a given society to the infiltration of an idea conceived by an individual thinker as providing for an order of things different from that existing at the time. A long line of philosophers from Plato down to Hegel have maintained that historical change or movement is the working out of the Absolute Idea which subsists in its own right outside time. They further hold that it is the function of the historian to trace the movement of that *Idea* in order to show that throughout history there is a consistent and orderly procession of events which reflects that Idea. They maintain that there is a progressive realization of the Absolute Idea in History.

Sharply opposed to this school of the philosophy of history stand those thinkers who do not share this mystical, or what might be termed, idealistic interpretation of history; they do not see historical events in this perspective and for their part they are content to point out that it is not the ideas but the inter-play of the forces of unthinking matter as it is reflected in the phenomenon of our consciousness that explains to us the facts of historical change. A representative thinker of this school of thought is Karl Marx, who, as is well known, made the materialistic interpretation of history the corner-stone of his philosophy of revolution. He rejected Hegel's idealistic interpretation of history although he was proud to his dying day of the fact that he

was a true disciple of Hegel and was never weary of saying that he had succeeded in rescuing Hegel's dialectics by stripping it of its mystical form. It will be recalled that in his *Letters to Kugelmann* issued in 1866, he pointed out, "Hegel's dialectic is the basic form of dialectics but only after it has been stripped of its mystical form, and it is precisely this which distinguishes my method from his."

In what follows, I shall make an attempt to show that regarded from the point of view of Reason, the idealistic interpretation of history is consistent not only with the postulates of a sound philosophy but is confirmed by such an appeal to experience as we are able to make when we review the course of history down the last three thousand years.

I shall proceed first of all to explain precisely what I mean when I say that it is *Ideas* that have moved the world, and that the emergence of an idea is a phenomenon which cannot be explained adequately in terms of the impact of material forces upon the individual or class consciousness as the Marxists would have us believe. In other words, my thesis is that the *Idea* descends from above as a fecundating principle with the help of which, the human mind is enabled to throw new light upon the environment, which is then seen differently as a result of the searchlight so thrown on the dark recesses of matter; it then proceeds to fashion, recast and reform it in accordance with its new mode of apperception. Conversely, any view that suggests that these ideas are themselves the result of the forces of matter, or as Marx put it more bluntly, that they are the effects of the economic or productive relationships in which individual classes stand to each other, is in my opinion, thoroughly *inadequate* to explain and account for the panorama of historical change, to say nothing of the fact that it is in conflict with the teaching of a sound philosophy of history.

2

What then do we understand by the word *Idea* in the context of the present controversy? Here, as elsewhere, definitions will not help comprehension of the problem, and I therefore propose to illustrate what I mean by the Idea, and the definition of the idea, if at all, will follow a little later.

Let us suppose that a traveller, who has lost his way in the darkness of a night, finds himself in an environment of which he has no conception whatsoever, in that, he cannot represent to himself precisely the sort of situation with which he is confronted. He is, as we say, groping in the dark, has what his senses of touch and hearing and smell are able to carry to him; he is not able to create a picture of it in his own mind with a view to subsequent action. He is not sure if he is on the path that leads to his destination as he does not know whether or not the next step that he is likely to take will cast him into the perilous predicament where he may lose either limb or life. Any action in such an environment would be rendered hazardous in the extreme and he would be unable to correlate his movements as the progressive realization of any consistent purpose. All the same, at any given moment, he will be able to represent to himself, however imperfectly, the nature of the environment by which he is confronted. With his hands out-stretched, his senses on the alert, he will go on cautiously feeling his way and he will falter if he is obstructed, and will thereafter, proceed to re-define his movement in another direction.

Now, let us further suppose that while our traveller who has thus been lost in unfamiliar surroundings and is so confused that he is not able to represent to himself clearly what he is about, all of a sudden sees by a flash of lightning that descends from above the whole of his surroundings illuminated and thus has the opportunity of perceiving for himself the kind of surroundings in which he has been caught. With the help of this illumination he is

able, partially at least, to discern for himself the path he should take in order to progress. We can in this illustration, without impairing the force of the point at issue, substitute for the illumination by lightning, another agency, as for example, a familiar voice calling this very traveller in another direction or, for that matter, some friendly hand catching his own as he stands perplexed and leading him on. All these agencies perform in some degree the work of guiding the individual to his goal. They do not constitute any element of necessity or compulsion; if the traveller were blind, he would not see that flash of lightning; if he were deaf, not hear the voice admonishing him to take the proper way; and if he were a sceptic, he would refuse to follow the lead given by the friendly hand. Ultimately therefore, it is up to the individual to respond and to react. There is no inevitability about the whole process.

It is my contention that the role which the agencies I have mentioned in the illustration play in pointing out the way to the traveller and guiding his action, is the role which the *Ideas* play in illuminating the path for humanity and guiding it to proper action.

Take the case of the institution of slavery which prevailed in the ancient world. The relationship between Master and the Slave was inhuman, brutal and completely unjust judged by the ethical standards of behaviour we have learnt to accept. But in the days in which slavery prevailed, these relationships were considered a matter of course; nobody construed them as being either inhuman or unjust. In fact, so great a philosopher as Plato, or Aristotle, found it impossible to conceive a state of social life without the institution of slavery; to them it came as naturally as the air we breathe. There was no question here of material forces fostering a deception in making people believe in the inevitableness of the institution of slavery. Any student of history, upon a proper examination of the materials before him, would come to the conclusion that

there have been civilizations where plenty and prosperity have been the order of the day, and where the type of economic warfare, of which Marx began to take serious notice, did not so much as exist, yet nevertheless down to the 19th century the institution of slavery, and traffic in slaves, still prevailed and was recognised by law. What then, it may be asked, was the force responsible for the emancipation of man from the bondage of man? The answer must be found not in the material forces that affect human relationship, but in the conscious statement by a thinker or a reformer who first having had the *Idea* of what human relationship should be, proceeded to denounce the institution of slavery as being contrary to the idea of justice and fair play. There was nothing wrong with the institution of slavery until it came in to conflict with the ideal relationship so formulated and defined, between master and slave. One begins to be conscious of the impropriety of a thing only after it has been pointed out as such; until then it is deemed to be inevitable, and in the natural course of events requiring no change. Almost all the important changes that have taken place in history, have been the result of the perception of the ideal relationship being in conflict with the existing one and a clear formulation of this discovery so that it could be transferred to others. The ability to realise that ideal relationship in the context of the social situation does, however, take account of existing impediments; for example, the conservative instinct of mankind and such other constricting circumstances. But the liberating influence is released only by the emergence of an idea. It is the *Idea* that works as an irresistible force and transforms the social situation.

Marx, upon examination of the relevant historical data, came to the conclusion that history presented to him a panorama of class warfare and in class interest he saw the prime-mover of social change. He claimed that the existence of classes is bound up with a particular historical phase in the history of production; by the application

of the dialectical method he saw in the clash of these classes the dawn of a new order of social well-being. It was a class struggle which inevitably led to social change, and constituted the inner movement of history. Mr. R. N. Carew Hunt, the author of "*Theory and Practice of Communism*", sums up the Marxian position thus—

"To understand social revolution we have, therefore, to distinguish between changes in the productive forces and the various ideological forms in which men become conscious of the conflict and fight it out. The real cause is always the former; but men are seldom aware of this and will believe that they are fighting for religion, political liberty or any other ideological motive. Marxists contend that it is indeed on the basis of this illusion that most history has been written, the true cause of revolutions having been thus concealed until Marx revealed it. They have to adopt this position because it is an article of their faith that every great movement in history—the rise of Islam, the Renaissance or any other—was ultimately due to the economic causes."

It was for this theory that Engel, at Marx's graveside, claimed that—

"Just as Darwin discovered the law of evolution in organic nature, Marx discovered the law of evolution in Human History; he discovered the simple fact hitherto concealed by the over-growth of ideology, that mankind must first of all eat and drink, have shelter and clothing before it can pursue politics, religion, science, art, etc., and therefore the production of immediate material means of subsistence and consequently the degree of economic development attained by a given people or during a given epoch form the foundation upon which state institutions, the legal conceptions, the art and even the religious ideas of the people concerned have evolved and in the light of which these things must be explained, instead of *vice versa* as had hitherto been the case."

It is my opinion that the contention advanced by the protagonists of the Marxian Interpretation of History is highly exaggerated; and that reflection convinces one that in arguing the way they do they are putting the cart before the horse; it is my opinion that ideas are a primary phenomenon and they, and not the 'productive-relations' in a given Society, alter the courses of History. I do not see, for instance, how the rise and spread of Islam can be explained by 'economic causes'. The foundation of Islam was the Holy Quran as revealed to Muhammad, the Messenger. He always claimed 'Bring a line (or verse) like this, if you are true". His call came from a source beyond himself. When the First Revelation came to him, 'Read in the name of the Lord that created', he was truly taken aback. What should be read and how? All this cannot be accounted for in terms of the 'productive-relationships' that obtained in Arab Society of the day. God's Light shone on a dark world and it was transformed. Truth appeared and the lie vanished.

Against the power of the New Idea what can avail? The old order crumbles only under the impact and onslought of a new idea. "It will afford no security from new ideas," says Emerson, "that the old notions, the laws of the centuries, the property and institutions of hundred cities are built on other foundations. The demon of reform has a secret door into the heart of every lawmaker of every inhabitant of every city. The fact that a new thought, a new hope, has dawned in your breasts, should apprise you that in the same hour a new light broke in upon a thousand private hearts. That secret which you would fain keep—as soon as you go abroad, lo! there is standing one on your door step, to tell you the same. There is not, the most bronzed and sharpened money-catcher who does not, to your consternation, almost quail and shake the moment he hears a question prompted by the new ideas. We thought he had some semblance of a ground to stand upon, that such as he at least would die

hard; but he trembles and flees."

Everywhere History presents us with the same spectacle; the precursor of all social change is always the *Idea*: and this 'idea' is not a reflex of environmental conditions but on the other hand is itself the formative power that shapes all external fatality into a newer pattern and casts it into a newer mould. *Idea* is the Reformer: the human being is only the channel through whom this idea flows and by his will is embodied in the world of Space and Time. All he supplies is enthusiasm—for every truth is automatically embodied in earthly settings the moment a devout, enthusiastic man, having faith in his mission, sets about working for the cause he believes to be just and true. "What is man born for but to be a reformer," says Emerson, "a Re-maker of what Man has made; a renouncer of lies; a restorer of truth and good, imitating that Great Nature which embosoms all and which sleeps no moment on an old past but every hour repairs herself, yielding us every morning a new day and with every pulsation a new life." In short, you cannot reform, except in terms of the *idea* you have of what you would have the world re-made into.

Similar observations apply to the Marxian theory of the "class struggle". Marx did not clearly comprehend the meaning of the word 'class' he so often used—he did not define it in the context of his own ideas. He read into History what he claimed to have discovered from its pages; in fact he proceeded to apply what was after all an *a priori* assumption to the facts of History and squeezed them to fit the Procrustean bed of his Theory. Considered as an empirical generalization his theory as every schoolboy knows is a ridiculous one. The formation of classes is itself contingent upon the subsistence of a type of consciousness in the members of that class by reason of which they can be viewed or grouped as a class. This consciousness was never known to have existed, say for instance, during the period of the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations; the slaves did not view themselves as slaves, as a class by themselves,

and the masters did not view themselves as a class owning the slaves. This is in fact true of any other dichotomy that one can conceive of. Even in an agricultural stage of social evolution there is no conflict between the landlords and the peasant-labourers, because there is no consciousness of the sort which gives rise to these classes.

But Marx by conceiving the idea of class conflict and by employing it as a lever of social change was able to give a new direction to history. The truth of the matter is that by a conscious formulation of the doctrine of class conflict he was able to accelerate the formation of classes, into capitalists and wage-earners. His idea of the class conflict cannot be explained as being a deduction from the lessons of history, although this idea, after it was consciously expressed and propagated, became the bed-rock of subsequent tensions that in turn brought about the requisite consciousness without which the formation of classes cannot even be conceived.

The interpretation of History offered by Marx cannot even explain the triumph of the Marxian ideology. "For if economic materialism really contends," says Nicolas Berdyaev, "that the human consciousness is no more than an adjunct of man's economic activities, then how are we to explain the origin of the intellect manifested by the prophets of economic materialism themselves, of that manifested by Marx and Engel which towers above the mere passive reflection of economic relations. When founding his doctrine Marx claimed to possess that type of reason which transcends the purely passive reflex of economic activities. But if the ideological structure of economic materialism represents no more than the figment of a given productive relation, of those, let us say, which come into being in the nineteenth century as a result of the struggle of the proletariat against the *bourgeoisie* then it is incomprehensible how the prophets of this doctrine can claim to possess a greater measure of truth than all those others whose systems are qualified as a self-delusion born

of this very figment. In that case their doctrine is another illusion generated by the same economic reality."

The influence of an idea and its impact on society may be compared to the impact of a stone that is thrown into the calm waters of a pond. All changes that take place as a result of the impact are proximately due to the immersion of the stone and eventually to the conscious decision of him who threw it. The Marxist on the other hand would like to argue that this stone came to be immersed in the water because it was a result of the inter-play of the material forces—the decision to throw the stone into the water according to him is not a primary but a derivative phenomenon; or, to be more exact, a mere superfluous concomitant condition which somehow appears contemporaneously with the event but has no influence directly upon either calling it into existence or giving a new direction to its onslaught in history...

2

Whence comes the *Idea?* The question is incapable of being answered if "whence" is regarded strictly as an adverb of space. *Idea* has no 'spatial' frame of reference. It is essentially a non-spatial term and one of its roles is to illuminate matter, give meaning to what is meaningless. It is akin to the spirit that animates us and, like the spirit itself, in the words of Messenger Muhammad, "It proceedeth from the Command (Amr) of my Lord." About the idea as a metaphysical entity we cannot say anything in our language which has been primarily designed to deal with space and the objects that are in it. We can only indicate its precise nature by resorting to an analogy; our expression can only be symbolical. The Greek word Idea is believed to have sprouted forth from the root '*id*'—which means to see: but more correctly, in my opinion, it comes from the Sanskrit word '*diya*', which means the lamp; etymologically therefore no matter what view of the origin of the word 'idea' is taken, it is to be construed either as light or as a

source of light. Like the eye that cannot see itself but which sees everything else, 'idea' is a principle of intelligent cognition and except as a direct experience of him who perceives it, its reality is not transferable by conceptual language.

Although we cannot adequately and rigorously define the *Idea*, we can learn to realize it within the framework of a material setting. By employment of a suitable medium of expression we can bring about its manifestation. This, in fact, is the function of all higher Art—to communicate the incommunicable, to transfer the essentially untransferable, to materialize the immaterial principle. When we speak or write, what we are attempting to convey by the use of either the spoken or written word is essentially the meaning which subsists quite independently of the medium through which it becomes manifest. A man makes History precisely in the sense in which the Artist 'creates'. And a man makes History only to the extent to which he is free to impress or imprint his ideas on material settings.

The birth of an 'Idea' in the world of 'expression' is an event in time—but its ontological validity or subsistance is completely independent of it. Its appearance in the World of Human Experience is contingent upon several factors: if the circumstances are propitious it will be able to reflect its existence in History. But the point to note is that it subsists in its own right and to revert to the analogy of the stone and the pond referred to earlier, it might be said that, for instance, if the pond is a frozen block of ice instead of its waters being in a liquid state, the attempted intrusion of the stone on its calm being will be frustrated. There are concatenations of circumstances that facilitate the consummation of a certain process—there are others that resist it. In each case it is relevant to know how the 'idea' can be adequately transposed to the 'world of matter',—which in relation to Man, as a Maker of History, really would mean the total social situation resulting from the combination of several circumstances. The irruption of ideas into the consciousness of man is like the down-pour of rain on land

that is parched—whether flowers or mere thorns will come out as a result of the interaction between them depends essentially on the quality of the seed, the soil and the sort of season that surounds the event. The same rain falls on the bosom of mother earth but not at all places do flowers and fruits come forth.

How about the descent of the spirit into the earthly moulds? It is truly an act of condescension for the spirit to stoop to transform the low-lying world of matter. Creation is an Eternal Act—Creative process is for us in time; after all our view-point can only be temporal. Eternity is a transcendental term (if the use of this inapt expression be allowed) and Time, as Plato taught, is but the moving image of eternity.

5

I have broadly indicated my views about the power of new ideas in shaping history. My main contention all along has been that man has the *capacity* in him of imposing a new form on the events that are taking place in the outside world and of thus altering effectively the shape of things in accordance with his pre-conceived notions of what their shape ought to be like. But I have not so far stated what, in my way of thought, is to be understood by 'History'. I have assumed that there is a workable definition of the concept of history and it is now time that I turned to this question.

Observation shows that we have history of a vast variety of subjects: not only a history of Thought, of Art, of Philosophy, of Science, but also a history of human institutions like the history of law, religion, of marriage and of morals. We have also the constitutional, the political, the economic and the social history. But whatever the subject-matter of history, in each instance, it will be found to be really an *account* of some persisting and essential trait of Human nature as reflected in those changes which is the subject of a historian's study and attention.

Although this essence assumes a variety of forms in its manifestation, the direct object of historical cognition appears not only to survive all these changes, but in fact seems to find fulfilment in those changing forms. Only that which grows and becomes different in form and yet persists in being the same in essence can have history. In human experience if there were only change which was unrelated to some persisting element against the background of which it is being viewed, we would not be able to know that there is such a thing as "change". If you look at a stone and see it persist in maintaining the same visible form, you cannot write a history of it for the simple reason that you have not seen its essence reflecting itself in diverse changing forms. On the other hand, you can write the history of our planet, for example, beginning with the point of time when it was weaned off from the sun and ending up with a statement of its present form. You have to assume that there is behind all the change that has overtaken it, a common essence which has persisted in spite of change. The very fact that a historical explanation is made about anything carries with it the implication that although it has undergone *changes in form, its essence has remained unaffected.* It is true that these changing forms may or may not coincide with the thing-in-itself. We can, for instance, write the history of a diamond ring, not because it in itself has undergone any changes, but because it has acquired different relationships with extraneous factors. We may say, for instance, that after the ring was made, it frequently changed hands and has been worn by certain persons; or that it has been lost to all use for sometime and then again discovered and re-used. But in that case the changes which are the subject-matter of historical study which we set out to record are those that have taken place in relation to the use to which it has been put by other persons. The mere use to which a ring has been put is considered to be a part of its essence and has therefore to be

taken into account in dealing with the varying forms it has assumed. More appropriately, however, there is no such thing as the history of this diamond ring—all we have is the mere connected *account of such knowledge as we have of the uses to which it has been put*, that is, its relevance to human life. Except that a thing takes part and contributes to *Human experience* it can have no history.

The moral of all these observations is that the historical approach is one which involves the *de facto* recognition of "time" as an illusory factor. Far from saying that reality of time is implied in every historical perception, it is only too true to say that it is its unreality which strikes us the most. In the first place, if time were real, we would not know how to escape it, as we always succeed in doing, by living in retrospect past experiences. Time, as we know, has an irreversable character, and that is why we cannot bid a yesterday to return. But in *thought* we can transcend it and survey it in all its totality from all possible perspectives, not only time as lived but time as projected, that is, its span across those possible experiences that are yet to come. Time is *our* measure of the *change*, but on that account it is for us outside the thing that changes. In fact it is, in each case, a mere projection of human experience of that change. Time is not "out there" —outside me. I have looked at the changing world against a background of my persistence. It is my essence, the experience of life as lived in thought-dimension which, when annexed to the tri-dimensional world, yields experience of time. In man's own experience time *primarily* prefigures as a distinguishing feature of the various states of *his* consciousness. The two states of my mental life, as when I am hungry and when I am not hungry, enter in my consciousness as two different experiences and the very fact that I can survey them in a totality implies that I can recall them as being different states of an identical essence in me. If by some experimental method we could maintain our psycho-physical equilibrium in such a way that we failed to

distinguish between any two of our mental states, the time sense would completely disappear. While I am asleep I have no time sense and that precisely for the simple reason that my own experience of my psycho-physical environment has been suspended.

'Time' as lived is a fruit of 'self-consciousness'. The mere awareness unrelated to the consciousness of my self will never yield the experience of 'time' as lived. When I am absorbed in any work (as we say, when we become one with it), I do not experience the passage of time. It is only when my interest ceases to be the controlling factor that the realization dawns upon me of my having spent a 'delightful hour'. Empirically, time-sense is not the same thing as serial or mathematical time. "My life," says Keyserling, "manifests itself in temporal duration in one direction but this duration is not homogeneous, it does not consist of equivalent elements which admit of summation: each moment of my existence differs in quality from the one before and the one after it; it is perpetual change. My life is no static permanent being, but a becoming, a change from one difference to another. I *am* in the present exclusively; it is the form of my existence; only my shadow is left behind in the past. And, if many a time shadow seems to be more present and more palpable, than the concrete present moment, this is due to the fact that my consciousness cannot keep pace with life; in the same way the eye clings to the fiery trail of the falling meteor, because it cannot follow the flight of the star ... Living time is not to be compared to a series of homogenous units like mathematical: it consists in the succession of heterogenous and non-interchangeable moments which do not admit of summation. The passing of a *span of time means for the organism the passing of a* definite number of life-processes within it. None of these can be reversed or passed without leaving its trace; what has once happened goes on for ever producing effects."

Where the awareness of the "self" has not emerged, the

question of time has also not arisen. The "I" in me refers to my consciousness that there is an abiding being which is involved in incessant becoming. We are, as a matter of fact, directly aware of our identity. This awareness lifts us out of the stream of time in which are located all its actual determinations. I feel at all times that *I am*. This means that my consciousness has one of its roots in the non-temporal sphere of Being—in the 'supra-personal' or metaphysical life.

6

These observations on the nature of Time have relevance to the problem of comprehending the full significance and import of historical knowledge. The nature and significance of time according to Nicolas Berdyaev constitutes the fundamental problem and premise of every philosophy of history. According to him history is a "process, movement and fulfilment within time" and therefore the significance to be attached to history is indirectly determined by that which we attribute to time. And so he raises the following questions:—

"Does time possess any metaphysical significance? Does it form part of that reality which penetrates into the inmost depths of Being? Or is it but the condition and form of the manifest or phenomenal world? Does it form a part of real being or is it merely phenomenalogical, that is, bound up only with appearances without permeating the interior reality and the core of being?"

These questions undoubtedly do arise if the nature of "organic relationship" between "Being" and "Becoming", "Reality" and "Appearance" are not clearly understood. But in the way the questions have been posed, in my humble opinion, they are incapable of being answered. There is an unconscious shifting in thought from the human standpoint to the standpoint of the Absolute: and we forget that whereas the former standpoint is possible for us to adopt, the latter is not capable of being adopted. In the

first place, the Absolute excludes the idea of any point of view being final and exclusive, for then it is not any more *Absolute*—then, it in fact, would become relative. What is continually being forgotten by most philosophers of Europe is the fact that both 'appearance', and 'reality' from the human point of view *are*: for us appearance is not something other than reality nor can reality be conceived from the human standpoint except as it appears to us. The very fact that we affirm the proposition that things *appear* carries with it the implication that to the extent that they appear they participate in the nature of reality. If you look at a hill from a considerable distance you will see that it presents a bluish appearance. If you, however, go sufficiently near it the blue colour will disappear and it will then appear considerably different from what you believed it to be when you saw it from a distance. Now, supposing the question were asked 'What is the relation of the appearance of blue hills to the hills as they are?', the only sensible answer that can be made to such a question is to say that there is no such relationship *per se* : the different colours whose relationship is to be defined are mere incidents of my own location in space—and therefore they are explicable in terms of the resulting varying impressions to which my consciousness is being subjected. 'Reality' is after all a construction in thought arising out of an appreciation given by our logical consciousness in relation to appearances that we sense directly. Time, as I have said earlier, is a necessary and concomitant framework within which my consciousness locates those appearances.

Upon a logical examination of this concept of time which trails alongside all that I experience, I come to the conclusion that it is not real because it is vitiated by contradictions. F. H. Bradley showed, in his book *Appearance and Reality*, that it is vitiated by the test of 'indefinite regress', and in his opinion it could not be considered as 'real'. I therefore, in thought, posit that the *ground* of my experience of time as lived must be such as to

be free from that contradiction. 'Eternity' is just a name for that ground which I postulate in order to comprehend the meaning and significance of time. Eternity can have no positive content so far as my normal consciousness is concerned.

If the procedure whereby I establish the ontological validity of the concept of eternity is the one that I have described, it would be idle to ask the further question: what is the relationship of *time* with *eternity*? Both of these terms denote merely a thought construction emerging from an analysis of my own experience and they are incapable of being correlated *inter se*.

Nicolas Berdyaev himself, however, proceeds to answer his own questions as follows:—

"To all appearances an insurmountable antithesis exists between time and eternity, and no relation can well be established between them. From this standpoint, time constitutes a sort of denial of eternity; it is a state which can have no roots in eternal life. But perhaps time is itself rooted in eternity and forms part of it? This is precisely the problem I should like to consider; I regard it as a fundamental problem of the metaphysics of history and one that constitutes an essential premise for every interpretation of the historical process. We are forced to assume the existence of two kinds of time, a good and false, a true and an untrue. On the one hand, there exists a false time; on the other, a deep time which forms part of eternity and which has escaped corruption. It is this problem which has opposed the various philosophical schools. One school, which has proved less dominant in the history of philosophical thought, but with which I am entirely in agreement, professes that just as it is possible to consider eternity in time, so it is to transcend closed time and transpose it into eternity on the condition, of course, that it evinces the eternal principle. Time therefore is not a finite circle into which nothing eternal can penetrate, but one that can be extended to comprehend it. This is one aspect of the

problem. The other assumes that time itself is rooted in the depths of eternity. And thus what we call time in our world historical process, in our world reality, which is a process in time, is a sort of interior period, a sort of interior epoch in eternity itself. It denotes the existence not only of our terrestrial time within our terrestrial reality, but also that of a true celestial time in which the former is embedded and which it reflects and expresses; and, according to the ancient Gnostics, it denotes that of the æons of the inmost depths of the Divine Being. But these æons prove that time exists for the very foundations of being and that a certain time-process occurs in the latter; and that this process is not merely the form of our closed reality opposed to the deep reality which is apparently in no way relates to time, but one that possesses its own celestial and divine time. And this would lead us to suppose that the very time-process itself, which is a world, historical process, occurring in time, and in our world of reality, has its origins in eternity."

With all respect to this philosopher, I think he has allowed himself to be involved in unnecessary difficulties. I have not been able to understand how "it is possible to consider eternity in time" or "to transcend the closed time and transpose it into eternity on the condition, of course, that it evinces the eternal principle". He has allowed his geometrical imagination to control his metaphysical thinking or else he could not have made the assertion: "Time therefore is not a finite circle into which nothing eternal penetrates, but one that can be extended to comprehend it." If you can transcend time and *experience what may be described as "Eternal Now,"* you may be a favourite of the gods, but even that will not enable you to assert *that eternity has penetrated into time. Eternity* by definition cannot participate in time: all that can be validly said is that *you can* transcend time. But in that case you are describing an altogether different experience which is alien to the framework of our normal consciousness. I do not deny that

that experience is possible. All I am claiming is the realization that for the purposes of comprehending the meaning of the historical process it is not relevant to indulge in this type of metaphorical verbiage. Historic reality does manifest itself in time and is, to the extent I have indicated earlier, modified, transformed, and given a new direction by the new thoughts and ideas which descend in the consciousness of man. We do not know how precisely the creative principle of Life reveals these ideas to us any more than we are able to comprehend how the permanent being is incarnating itself incessantly into the framework of empirical determinations. But all we do know is that the emergence of ideas cannot be accounted for in terms of the mere empirical categories. It is beyond the reach of experience to account for the infiltration of those ideas in our consciousness.

7

Goethe has fully dealt with this problem in the only way in which it is possible to deal with it, that is, on the premises of normal consciousness and for this, I must refer the reader to the central idea of his "Faust's wager with the Devil". Those oft quoted lines are :—

"If ever time should flow so calmly on
Soothing my spirits in such oblivion
That in the pleasant trance I would arrest
And hail the happy moment in its course,
Bidding it linger with me . . .
Then willingly do I consent to perish."

A moment of supreme joy does sometimes creep in to our consciousness which is so unlike any other moment that it can hardly be compared with it. Such a moment has a spiritual halo and splendour, and it is the joy of experiencing such a moment which seems to be the *summum bonum* of earthly life. That, at least, is what Goethe would have us believe. Faust enters into this contract to part with his soul to the Devil on the condition that the latter should bring

such a moment to prevail in his life and that he could say, "O! moment tarry thou a little longer." And in the drama I am referring to, when that happy moment does at last pre-figure in the consciousness of Faust, he perishes, in the earthly sense of course, but his soul goes, not to Satan, but to God. And this happens in conformity with the earlier contract entered into by Man with God.* But, surely, Goethe will not have this experience on the part of Faust interpreted to mean that 'eternity has penetrated into time'.

The best that has ever been said on the nature of time is to be found in the following lines of Shakespeare, and the best comment on those lines is to be found in Mr. Aldous Huxley's recent novel *Time Must Have a Stop*:

"But thought's the slave of life, and life's time's fool,
And time, that takes survey of all the world,
Must have a stop."

Three statements appear in these lines:

(*a*) Thought's the slave of life,
(*b*) Thought's life's time's fool, and
(*c*) Time that takes survey of all the world must have a stop.

As to (a), modern philosophers who call themselves instrumentalists, pragmatists, or anti-intellectualists, all contend that the role of thought is to minister to the needs of practical life; being itself a tool, they say, and having been evolved by life to deal with the world of matter, it makes more tools in order that life might be able to design *successful* action and so secure its adjustment to the environment. This status assigned to thought is undoubtedly a valid one—but valid one only in so far as it goes. It is not, however, the complete truth; for thought has another function also. It has the capacity to *infer* from what it does and deals with, the existence of some transcendental

*Of this primeval contract there is also a reference in the Quoran "Am I not your Lord", asks God of the Soul of Man who replies "Indeed thou art". Also *cf.* Quoran's assertion regarding man's origin & distiny. "Indeed we are from God and to Him is our return."

reality which is not completely exhausted in all that appears to us. To the extent to which the role of thought is *restricted* to its being construed as only the slave of life, these are all false philosophies and have been the parent of all the chaos and confusion which we notice in the contemporary world order.

As to (b), thought is described as "life's time's fool". If the function of thought is to serve life's *immediate* purpose it is bound to appear, after some time has elapsed, as life's time's fool. "By merely elapsing," says Mr. Huxley, "time makes nonsense of all life's conscious planning and scheming. No considerable action has ever had all or nothing but the results expected of it. Except under controlled conditions, or in circumstances where it is possible to ignore individuals and consider only large numbers and the law of averages, any kind of accurate fore-sight is impossible. In all actual human situations more variables are involved than the human mind can take account of; and with the passage of time the variables tend to increase in number and change their character." The result therefore is that all contrivances of thought which have direct relevance to designing action on the changing environment are bound to appear meaningless with the passage of time. In fact, the whole range of historical research ultimately establishes the truth that all mechanisms designed by life as a response to a challenge from the environment go out of 'gear' after sometime; and most of the civilisations and cultures have perished precisely because human initiative did not discard earlier modes of reaction and combat new emergencies with fresh and adequate responses. Life has to be balanced between the two extremes: conservatism and change. And thought which constitutes the main driving force of change sometimes comes to suffer from the dead weight of its own products and achievements that get congealed in static forms. The infant human spirit, is not able to rid itself of these "outworn" institutions or forms of

behaviour and replace them by more appropriate substitutes with the result that its capacity to alter the course of History by giving to it spiritual direction gets impaired, if not completely dislocated. That accounts for the decline and fall of human civilisations.

And finally as to (c). It must be admitted that Shakespeare has shown deep metaphysical insight in the final clause of the verse quoted above: time must have a stop. On this clause Mr. Huxley's comment is as follows:—

"And not only *must*, as an ethical imperative and an eschatological hope, but also *does* have a stop, in the indicative tense, as a matter of brute experience. It is only by taking the fact of eternity into account that we can deliver thought from its slavery to life. And it is only by deliberately paying our attention and our primary allegiance to eternity that we can prevent time from turning our lives into a pointless or diabolic foolery. The divine Ground is a timeless reality. Seek it first, and all the rest—everything from an adequate interpretation of life to a release from compulsory self-destruction—will be added. Or, transposing the theme out of the evangelical into a Shakespearean key, you can say: 'Cease being ignorant of what you are most assured, your glassy essence, and you will cease to be an angry ape, playing such fantastic tricks before high heaven as make the angels weep'."

8

It is clear to me that all history ultimately is the biography of the human mind, an intelligible account of its activities. It is the function of the historian to detail the various forms of expression that have been assumed by our institutions and to see in those changes the persistence of the Human Essence. The more he penetrates into the significance of historical data which constitutes the evidence of the persistence of Human Nature, the more would he be able to understand the mystery of its creative power. The universal spirit, as it unfolds itself in time, has to

assume ever-changing forms to express its power, its glory and its beauty. We all share in this Universal Mind and all our ideas and institutions are in a sense its incarnations. "Of the works of this mind," says Emerson, "history is the record. Its genius is illustrated by the entire series of days. Man is explicable by nothing less than all his history. Without hurry, without rest, the human spirit goes forth from the beginning to embody every faculty, every thought, every emotion which belongs to it, in appropriate events. But the thought is always prior to the fact; all the facts of history pre-exist in the mind as laws. Each law in turn is made by circumstances predominant, and the limits of nature give power to but one at a time. A man is the whole encyclopædia of facts. The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn: Egypt, Greece, Rome, Gaul, Britain, America, lie folded already in the first man. Epoch after epoch, camp, kingdom, empire, republic, democracy, are merely the application of his manifold spirit to the manifold world." The study of History is thus a liberating experience. It shows that we can escape the grip of the present and fly far back in time and survey the entire series of facts as culminating in the present order of things. By going over the entire ground of 'Becoming' our consciousness can grasp the essence of 'Being', and thus it is that the historic imagination enables us to experience the cosmic emotion. The understanding of the historic process is a direct peep into the Nature of Reality. It enables us to transcend the limitations of 'here' and 'now'. The very fact that it is possible for me to understand the mode of the life of the ancient Greeks, Hindus, Chinese, and enjoy the creations of their mind shows that I have in me the capacity for identifying myself with and absorbing all that mankind has felt and found.

The study of History would also reveal to us the relative unreality of any given form of the manifestation of spirit unless it be such as can be construed as a function of

the higher law. Every form is by itself an "unmeaning episode" in the life of the spirit: its value resides in the recognition that it reflects the universal spirit. All the *pride* we take in our institutions would decidedly look misplaced if we were to view them against the march of time. Why should we regard ours as the best age? Why should we exaggerate the importance of contemporary institutions and cultural formations in which the Universal Mind has unfolded itself? History teaches us Humility. It tells us that no temporal form of the expression of the Universal Spirit is final.

9

There is, of course, in Human History enough evidence of the realization of that very creative principle which seems to be at the back of the whole Creation. But no 'civilization' or 'culture' embodies, from the cosmic point of view, a final incarnation of the 'creative principle'. They are on that account incomparable and it is as absurd to compare and comment on their validity as it would be for us to judge, from the comparative merits of several flowers that grow in a spring garden, the relative 'validity' of their existence.

The mind of man acts as a channel through which the light of Heaven descends in the form of new ideas. We are called upon to harness our will in support of the ideas that are thus revealed to us in order that the Universal Spirit may yet have additional forms for its manifestation. It is only in this sense that it is given to man to make history. Only to the extent that he is free and liberated from the pressure of his biological needs and other earthly motivations that he can serve as an agent for the fulfilment of the Higher Law. And the more he is rooted in that freedom, the more does he become qualified to further the historical processes by imprinting on them newer and newer patterns of his spiritual power.

10

I am convinced that there is no such thing as 'inevitable' human progress. There is no guarantee that the historic processes will necessarily reach higher targets, that is, realise those objectives that can be conceived to lie on the plane of possible human evolution. The one lesson that is taught to us by history is that there is no such thing as the 'law' of necessary or inevitable progress. Civilisations emerge and disappear and their achievements not infrequently lie buried and forgotten. The vanishing civilisations of mankind do not necessarily hand over the products of their thought or the monuments of their achievements to succeeding civilisations. We cannot even generalise and assert the existence of an inviolable law in terms of which the growth and decay of a civilisation and the process by which a fresh civilisation is born out of the old can be adequately explained. Those monumental works like Toynbee's *Study of History* or Spengler's *Decline of the West* do, no doubt, present to us grand attempts made by mighty minds to discover and formulate the laws which, regulate the rise and fall of civilisations. But as far as I have been able to analyse their argument I have not been impressed by that portion of their thesis which deals with the triumphant announcement that such laws of historical evolution do exist or can be formulated. Mr. Toynbee's *Study of History* as yet has not been completed but if morning shows the day, I think we should safely conclude that he will not be able to formulate, as a result of his observation of the march of twenty six civilizations, any law which would satisfactorily account for the rise and fall of human civilisations. If anything, his *Study of History* is founded upon the belief that the intelligible unit of historical study is not 'nations' or 'periods' but 'societies', and he does not so much as visualize the panorama of history in terms of the destiny of mankind treated as one indivisible unit. He has brought his biological imagination to bear

upon the interpretation of historical material; and the only principle of interpretation that he has formulated successfully shows that he has fallen back on the theory of "challenge and response" without in any manner taking the trouble of telling us whether this *challenge* of which he speaks is consciously experienced as a historical reality by the societies studied by him and the response made by them as a sort of an attempt to meet that challenge. If the entire process is mechanical and unconscious then, of course, the fate of Human History is handed over to non-human forces. If, on the other hand, it is regarded as something which is controlled by human knowledge and consciousness, we are back upon the point with which I started when I said, "Ideas alone constitute historical forces in terms whereof the emergence of newer patterns of social forms can be explained." It is not clear if from his *Study of History* Mr. Toynbee has discovered any one inexorable law in terms of which the fate of everyone of the twenty six civilisations he has examined can be understood and explained. He does in certain places, of course, admit that the sole source of action which transforms society is the individual. He also says that the total achievement of mankind is explicable by an appeal to two factors: (a) inspiration or discovery by individuals whatever it may be, and (b) the conversion of society to which they belong to this new way of life. Whether or not this conversion does take place, again, depends upon the mass of mankind undergoing the actual experience which has transformed the creative individuals or by their imitation of its externals which he names "mimesis". This is, of course, another way of saying that unless the new idea touches the "Collective Unconscious" by raising it to the surface of our mental life where action can be contrived, it will not be able to transform the social order...

II

What then is the destiny of man? Is there any meaning or purpose which can be read into the panorama of history as it unfolds itself before us? The only answer that can validly be made to these questions is that no ascertainable purpose or meaning can be read into the history of mankind, and this, for the very good reason, that we are, as yet, in the midst of that process; and unless the whole drama is witnessed right to the very end, it would be very difficult to say, what, if any, has been the goal towards which human evolution has been moving. Those who contend that humanity is progressively marching forward towards some well defined goal are, in my opinion, going beyond their premises of thought and experience into the region of mere speculation. The idea of progress which was the favourite theme of the 19th century thought has now been dissolved in the acids of the modern tests to which it has been put, and given a decent burial; and I hope it will never be resurrected again. Those optimists who believed that there is an upsurge noticeable in the evolution of Humanity have been disillusioned. They have seen enough maladjustment, chaos and disorder in human relations to be able to believe that the ideal state of affairs is round the corner. In my opinion, the ideal of progress, in so far as it prescribes the inevitability and certainty of mankind reaching a higher order of existence by the mere elapsing of time, has created all kinds of complications in the modern world and the sooner it is renounced the better. After all, the emphasis has been misplaced: the emphasis should have been, not on the mechanicalness of evolutionary movement so much as upon that element of *human freedom* to which, in the last resort, all the progress that mankind has so far witnessed is directly attributable. But to place that emphasis on human freedom necessarily involves the acceptance of the belief that unless that human freedom is properly directed to the realization of the ideal ends and pressed in the service of the Universal Spirit, whose emanation it itself is, it is liable, by

the sheer process of its own abuse, to take us backwards: *Atavism* can be as much the fate of historic movement as its evolution. There is nothing static observable in the arena of time; either things go forward or backwards: in no case is it possible to conserve them for any length of time in a state of immobility.

All those who worship the idol of human progress necessarily imply that all that is in the past and the present is just a *means* for securing a higher type of human existence, that is to say, a social order where all will be well and where all those elements that have been at war with the harmonies of human life will have been eliminated—or if you are a follower of Freud, sublimated into becoming serviceable lubricants for its maintenance. There is no reason to think that Human history discloses any such "glorious" prospect, and if one were convinced that we must labour in order that that last phase of human evolution should come to be, there would be no real *incentive* for the present generation to forgo its immediate goals and renounce all that is near at hand in order that mankind, let us say, fifty centuries hereafter, may live at peace with itself. This attempt to make the living present subservient to some hypothetically conceived ultimate order of things is not a laudable venture. Even if one were to subscribe to the Hindu theory of 'Recurrent Incarnations' through which the human ego is fated to live out its potentialities, there can be no ethical justification for any effort either at the plane of individual or collective life being exerted for the realisation of those distant though delightful goals which are being envisaged by our speculative dreamers, goals which, for aught we know, may never be realized. There is no reason to suppose that the entire movement of history is to be viewed either as a means for bringing into being that far off Divine Event or that the realization of divinity, if that be the destiny of man at all, is such a distantly situated goal that nothing that we can do here and now to accelerate our individual pace towards it, will enable us to reach it within the span of our

individual terrestial lives.

The whole trouble arises from the fact that we do not believe that "God is nearer to us than the veins of our neck" and that it is *possible* for each one of His servants to qualify himself for beholding Him in all His glory and greatness even within the small span of time that has been allotted to him here below. The purpose of evolution in the historical sense is to secure greater liberation of the *individual*, in order that he may be enabled freely to choose his path. It was said of old, "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it," but in a later Heavenly Book it has been revealed to the Last Prophet that he would find "people walking in *crowds* on their way to God." Modern history shows us the phenomenon that the general average level of mankind is steadily rising higher and higher. That social order is the best which enables a greater number of people to be liberated from the pressure of earthly needs so that they are enabled to secure their salvation by being absorbed in higher pursuits. It is no doubt true that sages, saints and mystics, in all ages and in all climes, have realized their destiny irrespective of the unfavourable conditions in which their lot was cast; but what is worthy of note is that such instances have been few and far between. It seems to be the aim of human evolution to bring about a greater fruition in this direction and to enable a greater number of people to realize their heritage of reaching higher planes of spiritual life. Historic destiny is thus comprehensible only in relation to this *idea*, namely, that it ensures for us conditions in which more and more people can be liberated to lead their lives in the service of their Lord—but this idea itself is based not on the facts of Human History so much, as upon the premises of a philosophy of Time which regards it as a function of Eternal Values. Ultimately there is no such thing as the "collective destiny of mankind". Mankind is just an abstract idea, and in the empirical sense of that term, there is no tangible evidence of any sort or kind to justify the

belief that mankind has any historical destiny. There is only *individual* human destiny. Each man must bear his own burden and struggle forward on the way that leads up to Him.

Men live together in societies primarily because, by cooperative effort, they facilitate the realization of that destiny which is reserved for each one of them. Unfortunately in society we observe that the forces of greed, violence and ignorance have brought in 'competition' instead of *co-operation*, disorder instead of order, and disharmony instead of harmony in human relations. Those impulses that find their culmination in these negative emotions like greed, violence, anger, envy, hate, have no doubt their biological relevance, but on the plane of the life, out of which Humanity is emerging, their persistence is causing havoc, and it is the role of human intellect to confine these once useful forces, (but which are now operating as dæmons of destruction), to their proper place.

Human evolution, let us not forget, is but a continuation of biological evolution. The moral law is not different from the natural law, but is a reflex of it on the human plane of consciousness. The demands of moral law which are voiced by the individual conscience are but the counterparts in the subjective consciousness of man of the laws that his intellectual powers discover in the physical world. The only difference in their *appearance* is that the latter is ruled by *necessity*, whereas the former is reared on the tender soil of human *freedom*. To the extent to which the individual proves to be unworthy for the due exercise and enjoyment of this gift of human freedom, he is degraded to the lower plane of animal life. The principle of intelligence in man then begins to abuse those natural impulses with which he has been endowed as an animal, and the ultimate result is that man degrades himself lower and lower and becomes worse than a beast. On the other hand, to the extent to which a man duly qualifies himself to deserve this gift of freedom, he is enabled to rise steadily higher and higher, as if in a celestial

dimension and thus becomes the recipient of greater and greater power. He then participates in the building of the human world as an agent of the Universal Spirit and reflects in his being the evidence of the existence ,of a higher destiny. A man can, by the proper control of his powers, thus stage an exit, as if *via* a short-cut, from the closed circle of historic evolution into the celestial world—without having to go through the whole cycle of endless historic births and deaths. This is probably what Buddha meant when he talked of *Nirvana* as being the ultimate end, or what the Hindus mean when they talk about a man being a *Jivanmukta.* It is the destiny of man to meet his Maker and the consummation of this destiny is not a far flung and distantly situated event, but is a goal towards which he, in all his loneliness, must endeavour to move here and now. And so the Last Book unequivocally declares, "Verily Man is skirting a difficult path to God but he will meet Him."

The general conclusion to which all reflections on the meaning and significance of human evolution take us is thus in accord with the teachings of all higher religions. Apparently there is some *necessary* connection between the *attempt on the part of man to contribute towards the ideal of raising the general level of mankind and his own individual evolution.* All mystics, saints and religious leaders emphasise the necessity on the part of the servantsof God, after they have had glimpses of Him, to come back to this world of human effort, in order that they may help the rest of mankind to go forward on the way that takes Humanity to its Creator. And this work is undertaken by them as a means to their own personal spiritual evolution. What precisely the nature of that connection between the Collective and Individual Evolution is, it is not possible to comprehend, except on the hypothesis that Humanity is one; and that although as individuals we are the bearers of higher values, our own individual evolution and therefore our destiny is intertwined with the fate of our fellowmen.

12

All those conceptions of history that interpret its movement as following some geometrical pattern of behaviour are, in my opinion, completely wide of the mark: whether the historic movement is rectilinear, cyclic, spiral; or, it follows a zig-zag wavering course, cannot assist us in the least in comprehending its significance. These views are all based upon an assumption that the future is determined and that the last day of reckoning shall read what the first dawn had witnessed. To repose one's faith in the inevitability of progress, as I have shown earlier, is to deny the reality of human freedom and to construe the entire march of history as being subservient to one and one master purpose, namely, that of reaching a high state of human excellence, which will be consummated in the last act of the Human Drama. Equally, in my opinion, is it wrong to argue the other way about, namely that every human civilisation or culture contains a seed of its own destruction and is doomed to disappear. To generalise upon the basis of fallacious analogies is easy indeed: how easy it is to believe that society has some manner of resemblance to the life-cycle of a biological organism! But that, in my opinion, is a wrong procedure. All philosophies of despair do scant justice to the power of the creative principle which is at work in the Universe. That all civilisations must necessarily pass through the inevitable cycle of rise and fall, is a generalisation which cannot be defended once the forces that constitute the spurs to human evolution and progress are believed to be of a non-earthly or celestial character. I see no fatality, no inevitability in the courses of history. Nicolas Berdyaev, one of the most eloquent philosophers of History, however, subscribes, in marked contrast to me, to the view that every culture contains its own seed of destruction and would have us believe that:

"Every culture at a certain stage of its development discloses a principle which saps its own spiritual foundations . . . Every culture (even the material one) is spiritual

and the product of the creative work of the spirit as applied to the natural elements. But culture develops a tendency to disintegrate in its religious and spiritual foundations and to repudiate its own symbolism . . ."

He further goes on to say: "To understand the destiny of culture it is necessary to perceive its dynamic principle and fatal dialectic. Culture is the living process and destiny of peoples. But it becomes evident that it cannot maintain itself at the high peak of its efflorescence. Every type of culture known to history demonstrates its liability to disintegrate and be transformed into another state to which the term 'culture' is no longer applicable. And that is due to the fact that it develops a will to new 'life', to power and dominion at all costs. The will to power at all costs is the principle of civilization. The latter is always interested, whereas culture is disinterested in its highest achievements. Thus culture ends and civilization begins when the 'enlightened' reason sweeps away all spiritual obstacles in the way of the profits and enjoyments to be had from 'life' and when the will-to-power and organized dominion of life are strongest.

"Civilization is the passage from culture, contemplation and the creation of values, to the experience of life itself whose torrent threatens to engulf man. Culture contains a principle which tends towards a practical-utilitarian and 'realistic', that is, civilizing achievement. Great philosophy and art as well as religious symbolism lose their significance and connection with 'life'. What had been considered the highest achievements of culture are now discredited. Its sacred and symbolic character are repudiated. Spiritual culture is proclaimed to be the illusion and self-deception of an enslaved consciousness, the phantasmal product of a badly organized society. The organization and technique of life are destined ultimately to emancipate mankind from the illusion and deception of culture, and to lay the foundations of a 'real' civilization. The spiritual illusion of culture had been produced by the

lack of organization and technique; but they are destined to vanish once civilization masters technique and organizes life."

In the first place, I cannot see how 'culture' is vitiated by any "fatal dialectic", if "it is the product of the creative work of the spirit as applied to the natural elements" unless, of course, you believe in the powerlessness of the spirit to cope with the task of continually revitalizing its own formations. Secondly, I do not see how *culture*, in the sense defined by this author, must inevitably lead to *civilisation*. As far as I know, 'civilisation' is another name for the culture of social values in so far as their manifestation in a wider social synthesis is concerned, and the term 'culture' itself is often reserved for those formations and manifestations of the Universal Spirit which directly deal with the operation of creative principle in respect of Human personality. Culture is something *unique* and has direct reference to the development of Being. It is the continuation of the same process which, if carried out in the field of the social cosmos, attracts the application of the term civilisation. It is quite conceivable that a higher degree of culture and civilisation may co-exist—but by and large, history does show that the eras in which individuals have reached peaks of cultural expression were those in which only a few individual men, and not the mass, have become the instruments for the articulation of deeper spiritual impulses.

But the explanation of this phenomenon is not far to seek. What is lost in length is often gained in breadth: whereas culture denotes the *depth* of human personality as manifested by its creative expressions, civilisation denotes the *breadth* of that same impulse in social forms. Of necessity, the ages that produce great poets, artists, will not show an equal rise in the general level of the culture of the masses. This phenomenon implies that the evolutionary urge asserts itself in a rhythmic manner and the distribution of its energies alternates between the culture of

individual and of the social aggregates. Therefore, the distinction which Nicolas Berdyaev draws between 'culture' and 'civilisation' is one which does not necessarily involve the assertion of incompatible principles or the recognition of that "fatal dialectic" which according to him inheres in the 'culture' of being. It is one and the same principle of creativity which now asserts itself in human individuality and later in social progress. The learned author himself remarks,—

"Germany at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries offers an example of the high efflorescence of culture; it then became famed as the land of 'poets and philosophers'. Few epochs have displayed as much will-to-genius. In the course of several decades the world was enriched by such geniuses as Lessing and Herder, Goethe and Schiller, Kant and Fichte, Hegel and Schelling, Schleiermacher and Schopenhauer, Novalis and all the romantics. Succeeding ages will look back with envy at this great age. Windelband, the philosopher of its decline, remembers this time of spiritual integrity and spiritual genius as a lost paradise. But had the age of Goethe and Kant, Hegel and Novalis, attained to the authentic higher 'life'? All evidence tends to show that everyday life in Germany was weak, wretched and split up into minute states; the power of 'life' had nowhere been realized; and the cultural efflorescence affected only the highest strata of the people whose general condition was lamentable enough."

For the very reason he gives, I hold a contrary opinion: great men are decidedly not the products of their times and in order that Humanity should at all move forward, it is, to begin with, these very favoured few who must initiate new styles of social behaviour and thus secure the spiritual transformation of the unfeeling and the 'unthinking' multitude. They release the new cultural impulses into action which later on become the fashion for the masses and bring about the rise in the average level of mankind. There is thus no contradiction between the passage from

culture to civilisation, and both of these can co-exist and they in fact have co-existed in an identical historical context. The Universal Spirit is omnipotent. *But it is up to man to take his roots in its soil.* I think it is some such belief at the back of this author's mind which makes him say, "A different type of will to 'life' and its transfiguration may spring up within a culture. Civilisation is not *the only possible passage* from culture with its tragic antithesis to 'life' and its transfiguration. There is also the path of a religious transfiguration of life and fulfilment of true being." Of course, which one of the possible paths, in fact mankind will take is a matter which cannot be predicted. Ultimately it is a question of one's *electing* to traverse the higher and therefore the difficult as opposed to the downward grade and therefore the easy path. So long as a man is true to himself and affirms his partnership in the creative process which has called the very universe into being and has given him the *will to transform this world of matter*, he will march forward "proudly defiant of the irresistible forces" which constitute the main challenge to the possibility of his being able to maintain continual progress on the road that leads to his Home.

Ultimately, as the Quran teaches, nothing belongs to man except his effort. The moment a man directs his effort towards ends which are forbidden to him, he gets crushed under the weight of all those hostile forces that have hitherto admittedly succeeded in shattering his pride and conceit. This is Divine Justice, secured through the operation of Natural agencies. It has been ordained in the interests of man that where he begins to abuse his freedom all Nature's forces will conspire to put him down, and will not let the son of Man, in his own interests, *run for long counter to the cosmic will.* These forces are, however, every moment of his life, inviting him to follow the right path that takes him to his Maker and everything that one sees in the Universe seems to be eager to extend the hand of cooperation to Man, and to minister to his needs.

Time is the slave of eternity and when man takes the initiative of reflecting the eternal values, *it does come to a stop*, thus enabling him to escape its prison walls and "see the Light that never was on sea or land". Then a new sort of life begins for him of whch, of course, very little can be said which would be intelligible within the framework of existing human experience.

1951:

Jean-Paul Sartre teaches:

(1) that man is unjustifiable; that his existence is contingent in that neither he nor any Providence has produced it; (2) as a consequence, that every collective order established by men can be transcended (*dépassé*) in the direction of other orders; (3) that the system of values current in a society reflects the structure of that society and tends to preserve it; (4) that it can, therefore, always be transcended toward other systems, which are not clearly perceived because the society which they express does not yet exist but which are anticipated and, in one word, invented by the very effort of the members of the society to transcend it.

* * *

I love God because He has given me the freedom to deny Him.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

A being contingent, unjustifiable, but free, completely plunged into a society which oppresses him but capable of transcending that society by his efforts to change it, that is what the revolutionary man claims to be. Idealism mystifies him in that it blinds him with its already given rights and values; it masks his power of inventing his own paths. But materialism also mystifies him, by robbing him of his freedom. The revolutionary philosophy must be a philosophy of transcendence (*une philosophie de la transcendence*).

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JEAN-PAUL SARTRE

CARDINAL PRINCIPLE OF EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY.

I

I shall attempt, in what follows, to set forth and expound what is generally regarded as the cardinal principle of Existential Philosophy. I shall also try to subject Existentialism to a critical examination in an attempt to discover how far that principle can be justifiably regarded as a valid basis for a sound philosophy.

It will also be my endeavour to analyse the implications of Existentialism regarded as a '*weltanschauung*', or a conceptually formulated attitude to the world; and to determine precisely the extent of its contribution to the solution of those basic philosophical problems, which the representative thinkers of this school of thought claim to have successfully solved.

Existentialism is a doctrine that has recently grown and flourished in France and, in fact, it may be said that it owes its vitality and vogue to the writings and personality of the French Philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre. This thinker has been rightly regarded as the main spokesman of the Existential Philosophy and any observations that I may have to make concerning the logical soundness of this type of philosophy are more or less based on Existentialism as he defines and defends it. Historically regarded, the origins of this doctrine can be discovered in the writings of thinkers like Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel and Kierkegaard and others; but the form that it assumes in the writings of the French philosophers of recent times, and particularly in Sartre's exposition of it, is materially different from the one which it assumes in the writings of its pioneers.

2

Sartre considers that Existentialism is of two main types: Christian Existentialism and Atheistic Existentialism. He claims that his philosophy falls within the scope of Atheistic Existentialism.

The cardinal principle of Existential Philosophy, Christian and Atheistic, is that Existence precedes the Essence. The meaning of the statement "existence precedes the essence" is that regarded logically, the starting point for any rationalisation of man's experience is in the realm of subjectivity. Existentialism postulates that there is nothing prior to the act of existence, of which each man is aware directly and immediately. Immediacy of experience gives us the act of existence and there is nothing that precedes existence. Thus the principle of certainty adopted by Descartes, "*Cogito-Ergo-Sum*" is the starting point of Existential Philosophy. In practical effect, the adoption of this view point eliminates anything that may be regarded as a metaphysical ground of existence.

We all know that the traditional philosophy of the East and West in its attempt to interpret and understand human experience, reaches the conclusion that there is an ontological ground for that experience—this ground is either believed to be Energy, Mind, Spirit, Absolute, or the Idea, etc. God, for instance, is the ground of the universe; eternity, of time; metaphysical self, of the psychological self; so on and so forth.

In fact, the function of philosophy is to discover some hypothesis with the help of which man's experience of himself, of Nature, or of Spirit may be rendered intelligible. Even Kant, for instance, after an analysis of the phenomenal world, was led to postulate the existence of the Noumenal World. Plato regarded the World of Ideas as real, and interpreted the Physical World of matter and motion as mere appearance, or shadow of that Reality.

The philosopher either starts with the givenness of experience and establishes the conclusion that there is

some extra-phenomenal reality which manifests itself in or through that experience; or, starting with some such belief that such a reality exists, he tries to explain the facts of human experience in the light of that assumption.

Even atheist philosophers of the 18th century, who, although they do not strictly assert the existence of a reality, on which atheistic disbelief may be grounded, nevertheless, as if by a backdoor, introduce some concepts in the metaphysical systems that they propound, in order to fill in the place which in traditional philosophy has been occupied by concepts, like God, the Infinite or the Absolute. For instance, all those philosophies, which define and adjudge man's conduct in the light of ethical aims or purposes like happiness, perfection, or pursuit of values assume that it is worth while for a man to pursue these goals and thus, indirectly extend an assurance that all these ideals are conserved and are realizable. In other words, they admit the reality of concepts like human nature, human dignity, human destiny. Thus, it is apparent, that by both methods, *i.e.*, either, in terms of a pre-existing ground which underlies man's experience, or by the attraction and influence that ideals and values have on human nature, man's position in the scheme of things has been adjudged, appreciated, and either applauded or denounced by traditional philosophy.

Existential Philosophy is, however, revolutionary in so for as it does not agree with any of these two approaches. It unequivocally asserts that because existence is prior to essence, in all our choice and in all our decisions we act *freely*; neither being determined by forces that precede or the factors that are prior to existence; nor are we again motivated by desires to pursue any goals or values conceived as being external to our will.

Thus, there is neither *push* by any factors that precede existence, nor any *pull* on our actions by ideals or values which may be said to be projected on the canvass of the future. Man, according to existential philosophy, is con-

demned to be free; free absolutely and unconditionally. A man, so the Existentialists argue, cannot be free if he is controlled either by anything which precedes existence, or by anything that exercises an influence on it.

Now, the doctrine of "Essential Freedom of Man" is easy enough to propound, the more so if you assume that existence is fundamentally prior to anything that may be regarded as external to it. But insurmountable difficulties crop up when one has to give an explanation of how, if a man is free and if nothing is given in the immediacy of experience, except the fact of one's individual existence, is it at all possible to explain the existence of other fellowmen or the common goals which mankind pursue or the conduct of man being at all judged as right or wrong? If a man is confined within the narrow prison cell of his subjectivity how is it that he considers himself one with mankind? How is it that he is prepared to surrender his life at the altar of a cause? Or how is it that he associates with his fellowmen in the pursuit of distant goals, goals which he knows he may not be able to realize within his own life-time?

No philosophy can claim any honourable and assured place for itself unless it is able to explain these hard facts which are established on the authority of the experience of mankind. The broad facts of history and of man's position in the social cosmos have got to be explained in terms of the cardinal philosophy of Existentialism. And it is here, in this undertaking, that Existential Philosophers find themselves confronted with a series of rather unusual difficulties, and manage to escape the charge of refusal to face the facts of life and history only by indulging in a sort of philosophical jargon, which puts even the practitioners of "Hegelean quibbling" to shame.

By a process of reasoning, the logic of which is not entirely clear, Jean-Paul Sartre, for instance, maintains:—

(a) That as existence precedes essence, we exist and fashion our image at one and the same time; the image of

man that is so fashioned is valid for everybody and for our whole age. He says: "Thus our responsibility is much greater than we might have supposed because it involves all mankind. If I am a working man and choose to join a Christian trade union rather than be a Communist, and if by being a member I want to show that the best thing for man is resignation, that the kingdom of Man is not of this world, I am not involving my own case—I want to be resigned for everyone. As a result my action has involved all humanity."

(b) That although values do not exist objectively still the very act of choice made by man in relation to rival possibility of conduct is an act that confers values on the conduct. Nobody, however, can help us to choose this or that course or conduct for the simple reason that the problem of life is a very complicated one. Nobody can decide which course he might pursue *a priori*, "if values are vague and if they are always too broad for specific cases that we are considering, the only thing left for us is to trust our instincts."

But how is the value of a feeling which promotes action to be determined? The answer of Existentialism is that the value is conferred by the act of choice. Value is thus the function of the choice and is not its cause, nor even a conditional factor in the making of that choice.

(c) That although there is no such thing as a universal essence, which underlies the different individuals that compose mankind by reason of which we may even talk of such a thing as human nature, still there does exist a "universal human condition." Thus a Chinese can understand an Indian and a Negro understand a Westerner, not by reason of any common human nature that is supposed to be present in each one of them, but merely because there is such a thing as a universal human condition. "This universality of man is not *given* but is perpetually being made. I build the universal in choosing myself. I build it in understanding the configuration of any other man, whatever be the

age he might have lived in. This absoluteness of choice does not do away with the relativeness of each epoch. At heart, what Existentialism shows is the connection between the absolute character of 'free involvement' by virtue of which each man realises himself in realising a type of mankind; an involvement always comprehensible in any age whatsoever and by any person whosoever."

(d) That in the act of choosing a man is not even influenced by what is called passion. "An Existentialist will never agree that a sweeping passion is a ravaging torment which fatally leads to certain acts, and is, therefore, an excuse. He thinks that a man is responsible for his passion." Nor can the act of choosing be influenced by the advice of a fellowman. On the other hand, if I go to A, rather than to B, for advice, I know in fact the type of advice that I am going to receive. In such a case, therefore, it is I, who choose the adviser not that the latter's advice controls my action resulting from any choice that I may make pursuant to his advice.

(e) The practical import of the philosophy of Existentialism is summed up by three words, words that are regarded as signifying the outstanding characteristics of the condition of man. They are: (1) Anguish, (2) Forlornness, and (3) Despair. Such is his position in the scheme of things that there is nothing outside man to which he might cling, or in which he might anchor his being. Everything that crosses his path has neither "absolute import, nor objectivity nor again absolute meaning:" ultimately whatever import or meaning it obtains is the result of the interpretation which is conferred on it by man himself.

3

Now each one of these elements of Existential Philosophy can be challenged—even upon the assumptions on which it is itself grounded. But I think, a better mode of demonstrating the logical and psychological flaws that vitiate this philosophy would be to approach it from its

own premises and to work out to their logical end the implications of its main thesis, namely: 'that the Being of the Man is nothing else than his plan; he exists only to the extent that he fulfils himself'. After all, it is mainly as a Philosophy of Action that Existentialism claims to be an invincible oracle, and it is therefore as well that I should attempt to exhibit its weakness from that standpoint.

If we analyse man's consciousness purely from the psychological standpoint, we would reach the conclusion that the existence of "self" is not a primary phenomenon considered as a factor of experience. The existence of "man" in his consciousness is not a primary datum of experience but the result of his thought. It is as a result of some encounter with reality outside this consciousness that the notion of our self as a separate entity at last emerges from the undifferentiated and vague feeling we have of our life's activity. The contention that "first of all man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and only afterwards defines himself" is not anything which can be acknowledged as a fact of direct experience. It results from our thought about experience. It follows from this that so far as our consciousness is concerned, the existence of "man" is only a derivative or a secondary phenomenon. The concept results from a cognitive endeavour to analyse that experience. The Existentialists say that man is undefinable because at first he is nothing: "only afterwards will he be something and he will himself have made what he will be." This act of willing is free because it is not controlled by anything. "Man is at the start a plan which is aware of itself, rather than a patch of moss, a piece of garbage or a cauliflower; nothing exists prior to this plan; there is nothing in Heaven; man will be what he will plan to be. Not what he will want to be. Because by the word 'will' we generally mean the conscious decision which is subsequent to what we have already made to ourselves." The effect of all these observations is, somehow, to make the fact of existence of man dependent upon

nothing other than his acts, acts that by themselves do not reflect any pre-existing reality. If in normal parlance we were to describe the character of man by saying that it is something completely outside his conduct although it reflects itself in the series of acts which go to make up that conduct, our description will necessarily imply that, in essence, the Being of the man is something primary and his character fundamental, as compared with that series of his acts in which he reflects that Being and character. The Existentialists object to this very mode of describing the situation. They say, for instance, that the old adage that a poet is *born* and not *made*, is wrong in principle. Similarly, they say that there is no genius "other than the one which is expressed in the works of art." Outside the works of art there is nothing else. Similarly, there is no such thing as persons who are "soft", "weak", or "cowardly" by nature. Factors like heredity or environment or forces of social, psychological or biological determination are totally irrelevant and cannot be justifiably invoked to account for or to explain the acts of human beings. A coward, according to Existentialists, is responsible for his cowardice. He is not like that, because "he has a cowardly heart or lung or brain; he is not like that on account of his physiological make-up; but he is like that because he has made himself a coward by his acts. There is no such thing as a coward constitution."

Assuming for a moment that this interpretation of our acts considered as a psychological phenomenon is valid, the question still remains if any act, in so far as it is *my* act, is not after all determined by forces either emanating from my personality or from the environment in which my lot is cast. The argument that man builds himself by his own acts has undoubtedly some element of truth, because it is the essence of human consciousness that it is modified by all its conations and, in fact, it is a "growing" something precisely because it has a capacity to be influenced by all that it does or by what is done to it. But to say

that, in the performance of their several acts human beings are completely left undetermined by other extraneous factors and considerations is to go counter to the basic facts of human experience. Just as the protagonists of the Philosophy of Determinism commit the mistake of denying the creative character of human consciousness and make the *will* appear as a servile and obedient slave of the forces that drive it hither and thither, Existentialists commit the opposite mistake of totally denying the influence of environment, heredity, and other factors which are an essential part of man's psychological make-up.

To illustrate the force of this contention, it is necessary that we should consider the earliest possible acts performed by new born babies. The child that has hardly been weaned away from the mother's womb instinctively searches for the nipple from the mother's breast: is this act, which can be referred to as a human act in the sense in which Existentialists would have us believe, free? In other words, is this their conception of a free act? Has 'freedom to act' emerged in the child's consciousness at that time? Has the child any option but to behave except as an automaton under the pressure of biological urges, reflexes and instincts? I have not been able to understand how Existential Philosophy can explain this type of act in terms of its premises and yet call it a free act. If it is their case that man becomes free only after he discards the life of instincts, then what is the precise point of time in our life-history at which that miracle happens? Is man responsible for calling 'freedom' to life and of escaping from the bondage of the mere biological determination, which seems to control his early life? At this hypothetical point of time when freedom to act somehow is supposed to come to us, how is it that this complete cessation of the influences of factors like heredity takes place. Even at that point of time, is 'will' completely *free* from determination by (a) the ideas that we have evolved as a result of our inter-action with environment, or (b) the ideals and values which by that

time have taken possession of our soul, thanks to the example of our parents, teachers or of our neighbours? How can we afford to exclude from our consideration of "human activity" all these facts and regard it as though it grew up in a splendid isolation and was always, as it were, unrelated to the prior biological and sociological setting in which it found its original habitat?

By, therefore, denying the relevance of extraneous factors in an attempt to explain and interpret human activity so as to make it completely consistent with unbriddled and "dreadful" freedom, the Existentialists involve themselves in numerous difficulties. Even if the choice of a possible alternative before us is a free one, even according to the Existentialists, there is *no option but to choose.* Even a decision not to choose is a choice. Anyhow, therefore, man *must* choose and what he does in the end choose shows that the consequences of his act are eternal. To that extent every man is *bound* and his 'involvement' in life is not a matter from which he can disengage himself. When we are grappling with a situation, we have to weigh the pros and cons of all possible alternatives that are available to us. Left to ourselves we would keep on considering and reconsidering possible alternatives and thus avoid the necessity of taking a decision. But the pressure of events compels us to choose and act even on insufficient data. The life of a Hamlet is tragic precisely because he would have himself fiddle with the question of examining and cross-examining the premises of a possible decision while the forces of life are clamouring for an urgent decision. Regarded from this wider point of view, it would appear that man is not free to have his own way. It is, in such cases, a matter of choice at the point of a pistol, and therefore no choice at all. How can we blame a man if he were so pressed by the immediacy and urgency of a decision that he had not even reasonable time within which to examine the basis and the implication of his decision and then involve himself as a free agent? To this question, the Existentialist Philosophy

can make no valid answer.

And finally, if there is no determination conceivable at the plane at which according to Existential Philosophy a man is free, then man's choice results from a mere *caprice* and cannot be considered either as moral or immoral, good or bad; and this for the simple reason that there is admittedly no goal or end in terms of which such an ethical judgment can at all be pronounced. Existential Philosophy not only demolishes the claims of *reason* to control human actions but it also, in effect, denies that human action has any moral tone or quality. In ordinary experience a capricious choice, even though ultimately it may turn out to be a right one, having regard to the consequences that emanate from it, cannot confer ethical value upon the course of conduct that we may pursue. Every action thus is as good as any other, and this necessarily so because all considerations which are normally relevant to the fact of takin a 'good' decision lose their meaning. I do not see how the intuitions of moral consciousness or the validity of ethical values can be defended upon the premises of Existential Philosophy.

There is a lot of talk about "universal human condition" or "direct perception" of other "selves" in the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre, but he does not, anywhere, attempt an intelligible explanation of how such things are possible if all we have to reckon with is the *pure domain of subjectivity*. If the whole of man's existence is bound up by barriers of subjectivity, I cannot see how, by mere quibbling of words, we can establish the objective existence of our fellowmen and the validity of the moral ends that we admittedly pursue.

And then, what is the meaning of the phrase "Universal Human Condition"? This phrase has not been precisely formulated. What is, in substance, the difference between "Universal Human Condition" which Existentialism accepts and "Human Nature" which it refuses to accept? It may be recalled that Hegel also starts with the same subjective attitude but he accepts the dialectical process as

being inherent in any Experience, and it is by the dialectical process that every phase of experience, atheistic or religious, is made to lead to the "Concrete Universal". But Existential Philosophy has no such device to get over its difficulties.

This is not the place in which I can deal with all the implications of Existential Philosophy critically. But suffice it to say that I have pointed out the fatal flaw which, in my judgment, vitiates this philosophy.

4

It now remains for me to offer an appraisal of Existential Philosophy regarded as a cult or a type of "total attitude to life" based on "the sermon from the pulpit" and adjudged, quite apart from its plausibility as a metaphysical system of thought and belief, as a 'practical philosophy'.

The genesis of this doctrine has been accounted for as being a reaction to the mood of despair which has overtaken European humanity as a result of recent 'events' that have happened in modern Europe, particularly in France. The impact of the two Wars has been undoubtedly the greatest in France. The last War, in particular, delivered a soul-crushing blow to the genius and pride of the French people; lovers of freedom, leaders of the thought and culture of Europe, fathers of that revolutionary spirit which permeates the political and social institutions of the modern West, they lay vanquished, politically humiliated in the wake of the onslaught of Hitler's militaristic might. A philosophy is, to a considerable extent, controlled by the temper of the times in which it comes to prevail and this is more particularly true of the philosophies of the modern West. A philosophy there is a transcript of actual experience and is not something which is called to life by the spiritually awakened man with a view to changing the times and altering the conditions that confront society. And this is necessarily so in relation to all philosophies that claim to be empirical and positive.

Reflecting on the evil, suffering and sorrow witnessed

by the French people during the five years of alien occupation Jean-Paul Sartre moralises more or less in the mood of a prophet:

" 'Perhaps a day will come when a happy age, looking back at the past, will see in this suffering and shame one of the paths which led to peace. But we are not on the side of history already made. We were, as I have said, *situated* in such a way that every lived minute seemed to us like something irreducible. Therefore, in spite of ourselves, we came to this conclusion, which will seem shocking to lofty souls: Evil cannot be redeemed.

'But, on the other hand, most of the resisters, though beaten, burned, blinded, and broken, did not speak. They broke the circle of Evil and reaffirmed the human—for themselves, for us, and for their very torturers. They did it without witness, without help, without hope, often even without faith. For them it was not a matter of believing in man but of wanting to. Everything conspired to discourage them: so many indications everywhere about them, those faces bent over them, that misery within them. Everything concurred in making them believe that they were only insects, that man is the impossible dream of spies and squealers, and that they would awaken as vermin like everybody else.

'This man had to be invented with their martyrized flesh, with their hunted thoughts which were already betraying them—invented on the basis of nothing, for nothing, in absolute gratuitousness. For it is within the human that one can distinguish means and ends, values and preferences, but they were still at the creation of the world and they had only to decide in soveriegn fashion whether there would be anything more than the reign of the animal within it. They remained silent and man was born of their silence. We knew that every moment of the day, in the four corners of Paris, man was a hundred times destroyed and reaffirmed' ".

Later on, of course, his mood and manner changes

completely and rising to the summit of his argument he lets himself go as follows :—

"Forced by circumstances to discover the pressure of history, as Torricelli discovered atmospheric pressure, and tossed by the cruelty of the time into that forlornness from where we can see our condition as men to the very limit, to the absurd, to the night of unknowingness, we have a task for which we may not be strong enough (this is not the first time that an age, for want of talents, has lacked its art and its philosophy). It is to create a literature which unites and reconciles the metaphysical absolute and the relativity of the historical fact, and which I shall call, for want of a better name, the literature of great circumstances. It is not a question for us of escaping into the eternal or of abdicating in the face of what the unspeakable Mr. Zaslavsky calls in *Pravda* the 'historical process'."

Existential Philosophy is not therefore, according to its defenders, "a sterile discussion about abstract notions which have nothing to do with experience. It is a living effort to embrace from within the human condition in its totality." All those questions on which traditional philosophy has focussed its attention are incapable of being solved, and it is waste of time to draw nourishment, dignity, and value of personality, from the 'universals' in which older metaphysicians indulged with such indecent familiarity. The best way is to reject the past; to concentrate on the immediate present; and to take a stand on the absolute freedom of man to create a higher order by action. Ideals and values are not conserved by the nature of things. It is for man to create the *essence* by willing it. Man has no nature. What he has is history. He is what he *does* and in doing what he does, he is free from all determination whatever.

The endeavour of Existential Philosophy is to rescue the concept of freedom and preserve it in an all-embracing and absolute form. The ordinary explanation that human conduct is controlled by factors like heredity, nervous

system, organic condition of bodily life or, is motivated by a desire to pursue goals regarded as values, has to be discarded if man is to be declared absolutely free. Nothing else but mere and pure *will* should be allowed to exist because if anything else besides Will is allowed to exist, the possibility of Will being acted upon by external forces would always be there. Therefore the Existentialists are very uncompromising on the question of a Will being influenced by anything else. But they forget that, if we start with the assumption that there is nothing but Will, and there is no understanding or feeling which may regulate or enlighten that Will, we are talking of a strange sort of Will,—not the Will which is noticed by us in our immediate experience.

The Existential Philosophy, if true, must involve the rejection of all the pre-existing forms of approach to metaphysical questions. In this sense it is revolutionary; and in this Modern World of ours, nothing attracts notice unless it is revolutionary. This accounts for the popularity and vogue of Existential Philosophy. The current belief is: we cannot pass as wise men unless we call our forefathers fools. But Existential Philosophy, although novel and therefore appealing, is not a logically coherent system of thought. And that, as I have attempted to show, constitutes its main defect. If the truth of a philosophy is the point at issue, Existential Philosophy will, of course, be found to be the least satisfactory doctrine.

What shall we say about the pragmatic value of this philosophy? How far can the practical implications of this philosophy of "personal existence" redeem mankind from the evils which are at war with the harmonies of human life? Is man to be a rudderless boat on the stormy sea of life with no map and no magnetic compass to show the way? All the great ages in history have been ages of faith; and nothing has been achieved by mankind except in eras where it had unlimited enthusiasm for its mission to realize these ideals which were believed to be rooted in the

constitution of man's personality, and which were believed to be realizable in the world where his lot was cast. Must a man reject all that is noble and heroic in the struggle of his precursors and repudiate their testimony which calls our attention to the necessity of serving that Higher Law whose incarnation in miniature we ourselves are?

And then man is not alone in his struggle: for even at the eleventh hour God does come to his rescue. Of course, if a man were to shut himself up within the narrow precincts of his subjectivity and refuse to see into its deliverance the reflections of a higher order, there is no compelling force or method by which he could be convinced about the reality of his higher destiny. But so long as he remains confined within the narrow prison walls of his subjectivity, he has no lever wherewith to correlate any of his actions with the actions of his fellowmen or even to hope that what he is striving for will sooner or later be within sight and then within his grasp. It is only, as I have said, by mere quibbling of words that the Existential Philosophers are able to establish, within the domain of pure subjectivity, the existence of other 'selves'. As a sample of that mystifying quibbling, witness the following :—

"The cartesian *cogito* does nothing but affirm the absolute truth of a *fact*: that of my existence. Similarly, the slightly enlarged *cogito* we are using here reveals to us as a fact the existence of another and my existence of another. That is all we can say. Thus my being-for-another like the emergence into being of my consciousness has the character of an Absolute event."

This awareness, or realization of the existence of other selves does not come cognitively but immediately and absolutely—and this awareness makes *me* an object for another. That happens according to Sartre, when someone looks at me. "In that experience of being looked at by another, I feel myself becoming not the transcendence I otherwise feel myself to be, but a mere object, a body appearing thus and thus in someone else's world." This

awareness involves the possibility if not the probable consequence that an 'internal hæmorrhage' of my world takes place—it bleeds in the direction of the stranger who looks at me. Thus *fear* is the only natural reaction on my part to the possibility that my actual world would be disrupted whenever I am looked at by another—and constitutes my original relationship to him.

If there is no prior essence which permeates my existence, however "crabbed, confined and cabined" it may appear to me from the empirical standpoint, I cannot possibly share a wider life either with my fellowmen or learn to renounce the present in order that higher law may prevail. Ultimately then the Existential Philosophy is but a poor attempt to rationalise the temporary and passing mood of despair which has overtaken Humanity. It is a futile attempt to resurrect the rebellious spirit in man and give to it an unbriddled authority to challenge the validity of all traditions, laws, customs and ethical determinations. But how long will the Son of Man skirt the path of despair, anguish—alas! the dead end of this blind alley is soon reached. Of old it has been said, "The foxes have their lair and birds their nests, but the Son of Man hath no home to call his own"—unless, of course, he finds a Home in God.

Why do Existentialists see, in what happened in France in recent years, evidence of a dark and dazzling tragedy, if, of course, as they would to have us believe, there is nothing beyond my 'existence'? If mankind has no inheritance to win, no higher law to reflect, it is all the same to us what happens. Why then this despair, this anguish, and this cry against the Evil? Is there not in all this frustration a clue that something is really at stake which it is not for the 'freedom' of man to fritter away, but for his *duty* to defend? And does not duty involve some debt to something other than the man who has to acknowledge it and pay it?

Listen again to Jean-Paul Sartre:

"Today, there is the threat of war, famine and

dictatorship. We are again supercharged—1918 was holiday time. A bonfire might he be built of twenty centuries of culture and accommodation. Today the fire would go out by itself or would refuse to catch. It would be a long time before the holiday season comes round again."

What is then man to do?

According to Existentialists, he *must* elect to defend all this heritage. But they do not *explain* why *must* a man do this. In fact they possibly cannot, because the moment they try to do so, they must affirm some ground beyond man's *immediate existence*. To do so would be to give up the whole case. And so they are contented to leave the matter there by the declaration, "Man is free: let him choose." *What* he is to choose, and *why*, are questions they do not profess to answer—much less the question, "Is there a guarantee, or at least a reasonable prospect of man's ever succeeding in transforming his present existence which is not only "dull", "foolish" and "short" but also one in which according to Existentialists we are face to face with "despair", "anguish" and "forlornness?" Traditional philosophy at least attempts to answer these questions. With what success it has answered these questions is altogether a different matter. It places a higher *value* on man's existence and invites man to *acknowledge* his duty of being worthy of it by freely renouncing the immediate, if *albeit* pleasant pursuits, in order that a higher order of things might come to prevail . . .

1950.

Life is a mission. Every other definition of life is false and leads all who accept it astray. Religion, Philosophy, Science, though still at variance upon many points, all agree in this, that every existence is an aim.

MAZZINI

To be able, as Confucius indicates, to follow what the heart desires without coming in collision with stubborn facts of life is the privilege of the utterly innocent and of the infant and of the sage who stand at the two poles of experience; of the infant because the world ministers to his heart's desire and of the sage because he has learnt what to desire.

WALTER LIPPMANN

Those only are happy who have their minds fixed on some objects other than their happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art of pursuit, followed not as a means but itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way. . . . Ask yourself whether you are happy and you cease to be so. The only chance is to treat, not happiness but some end external to it as the purpose of life.

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THE GOAL OF ETHICAL ENDEAVOUR

Moral action is primarily concerned with the *desires* that form themselves in us in relation to 'objects' that are considered as 'good'. What then is the nature, function and value of a given desire? It is obvious that although each man pursues his desires he does not know, in the event of there being a conflict between two rival desires, which way to go. The conflict I speak of is not confined only within the scope of mere individual life but is also to be found where the desire of one man, for an identical object, comes in conflict with the rival desire of another. All the good things of life, here below, are as scanty as is bread in a besieged city. In a world where there was perfect adjustment between human desires and the environment, there would be no problem of evil. There would be no sin, no sorrow, nor shame; there would be no such thing as fear, frustration or pain. But the difficulty is that we do not live in such a well-ordered world: we live in a world of struggle and strife, of toil and tears.

Conceived in pure abstraction, the problem of dealing with a situation that results from 'conflicting desires' could be faced in two ways: one of them is *to cease to desire anything and thus to annihilate the very will-to-live* and the other is to regard 'conflict' as a mere opportunity for transcending it. And the 'conflict' can be transcended and resolved only if we know the relative values of the desires: then alone can we follow the one that is more 'valuable' in the moral sense than the other. Choice is the function of 'knowledge'—knowledge as it informs and guides the will.

Take, for instance, the view that is advocated by the Buddhists: the only escape they can conceive of is the escape from the wheel of life, from the cycles of birth and

death, into *Nirvana*—and this is to be achieved by extinction of desire. The difficulty with this approach to life has been pointed out again and again: and it is that in ceasing to desire, you once again desire the extinction of desire—the desire thus remains. And why should we desire to cease to desire? The answer to this question leads us to the goal of moral action once again.

What then is the goal of moral action, what is the end of moral endeavour? Unless that question is answered how is it possible to say which one out of the contending desires are we to follow: we can test the moral tone of a desire and its relative superiority only if we have before us some clearly conceived end, in relation to which, such a determination can at all become possible.

Traditional moral philosophy drew its inspiration from religious consciousness. The end of moral action was either the perfection of the individual or the fulfilment of the ideal of self-realization. At a somewhat later stage, in the teaching of utilitarian philosophy the ethical ideal was reconciled with the pursuit of pleasure, or happiness. 'The greatest good of the greatest number' became the watchword of the utilitarians. The advancement of biological science brought about a shift in the emphasis of this ideal of the utilitarians, and the end of moral action was characterised as "the promotion of the welfare of the race".

But with the advance of man's knowledge, with the liberation of his intellect, the problem of morality could not any more be regarded in the spirit and manner in which traditional ethical philosophy is wont to see it. All the theistic foundations of moral action having been undermined, we have to find, within the framework of existing scientific knowledge, the grounds on which to base the claims of the moral law. The supernatural sanctions that were invoked by the classical writers to explain the phenomenon of moral obligation are no longer taken seriously, and it no longer avails to tell the modern man that he should do

'good' and be 'good' in order to please his Creator. The general climate of scepticism in which modern man finds himself is largely due to the fact that he can no longer be made to believe in the transcendental or supernatural source of moral law. 'The acids of modernity have dissolved the fabric of our old ancestral order', and the modern mind that is trained in the way of scientific thinking is not prepared to believe a thing for which there is not sufficient evidence. Happy indeed are those who find in the growth of modern knowledge the confirmation of what revealed religion teaches; blessed are those *who can believe* that there is a preserver of the moral order, the invisible king of the creation *and who* can *believe* that all the processes of nature that are studied by sciences like physics, chemistry and biology, far from negativing the existence of such a supreme power, provide the best argument that there can be about the sway and superintendence of God over the universe. For such fortunate few as these, the moral problem does not raise any tormenting questions. They do not require an argument to prove that this world is guided by some supreme and wise power and that all a man is called upon to do is to surrender himself at the altar of that power and to do His will.

Here is, for instance, Mr A. Cressy Morrison, a scientist, who claims that animal wisdom speaks consistently of a good Creator who has infused instinct into the otherwise helpless little creatures:—

"The young salmon spends years at sea, then comes back to his own river, and travels up the very side of the river into which flows the tributary where he was born. What brings him back so precisely? If you transfer him to another tributary he will know at once that he is off his course and he will fight his way down and back to the main stream and then turn up against the current to finish his destiny accurately.

"Even more difficult to solve is the mystery of eels. These amazing creatures migrate at maturity from all

ponds and rivers everywhere—those from Europe across thousands of miles of ocean—all bound for the same abysmal deeps near Bermuda. There they breed and die. The little ones, with no apparent means of knowing anything except that they are in a wilderness of water, nevertheless start back and find their way not only to the very shore from which their parents came but thence to the rivers, lakes or little ponds—so that each body of water is always populated with eels. No American eel has ever been caught in Europe, no European eel in American waters. Nature has even delayed the maturity of the European eel by a year or more to make up for its longer journey. Where does the directing impulse originate?

"A wasp will overpower a grasshopper, dig a hole in the earth, sting the grasshopper in exactly the right place so that he does not die but becomes unconscious and lives on as a form of preserved meat. Then the wasp will lay her eggs handily so that her children when they hatch can nibble without killing the insect on which they feed; to them dead meat would be fatal. The mother then flies away and dies; she never sees her young. Surely the wasp must have done all this right the first time and every time, else there would be no wasps. Such mysterious techniques cannot be explained by adaptation; they were bestowed."

But there is a large section of the present day world which is not satisfied that any such Power exists. And it is for such people that a ground has to be discovered for justifying the ideal of moral action. Mere appeal to supernatural sanctions will not do in their case.

It is undoubtedly true that a scientific knowledge of human nature is not adequate, and even the scientists themselves are not dogmatic in regard to the finality of the findings of modern science. They are aware that the history of science is the history of shifting conclusions and altered findings. The findings of the physicists of the seventeenth century have been completely exploded by contemporary physicists; and this observation which holds

good in physics holds good in nearly all the positive sciences. But nevertheless there are certain well established truths which may be regarded as indisputable, and it is as well that we start considering them in order to discover in the field of human conduct, what might be right for us to do and what would be necessary for us to avoid.

The findings of modern biology and psychology have familiarised us with the truth that within the life span of a human being, the passage from infancy to maturity is to be thought of as a transition from the domination of "momentary pleasure and pain" to the dominion of "reality"* The first stage of development takes place in the womb of the mother, where the embryo lives as a parasite on the mother's body: it has no separate, independent existence: its life depends upon the life of the mother. The external world does not exist for such a child, and if it exists at all, it exists in relation to the body of the mother. All the primary biological needs, that is, the intake of food, warmth, protection, are provided by the mother's body. All the instincts inherent in the embryo are satisfied within the womb, and this state of embryonic life has been called a period of *unconditional omnipotence*.

As soon as the child is delivered from the darkness of the mother's womb into the world of sunshine, the first impact of a disagreeable and terrible impression is made upon it, and the tranquillity that the fœtus enjoyed in the womb is rudely disturbed and the trouble of living begins. The child begins to cry, and from that point of time throughout his earthly career, the son of man *appears to hanker after and pine for the recovery of that state of perfect prenatal adjustment which it appears to have enjoyed in the mother's womb*.

The whole earthly career of man, so it appears to me, is to be construed as an attempt to secure adjustment between the external environment and his own inner processes.

*The argument on this point in the sequel closely follows the one employed by Walter Lippmann in his Book "A Preface to Morals".

There are two difficulties that are being encountered in this venture. One is that the external nature or environment is not itself stable and constant but keeps on varying from day to day. The environment is not fixed and immutable, and intelligent action can not be designed to deal with it once and for ever. The constant change in the environment demands that the individual comprehend its laws of behaviour, laws in terms of which one can account for its changes so that intelligent action can be designed in advance to meet all the contingencies that might arise. The second difficulty in the way of a perfect adjustment between the individual and the environment is that the individual himself is changing; the life that is unfoldting itself in him gives him different complexions: childhood, adolescence, youth, old age, may be mentioned as marked phases of that inner transformation which the career of life in his being occasions. The impulses and the instincts in the child that demand satisfaction are not fixed and unalterable reflexes but they themselves undergo transformation as soon as *knowledge* of the way in which those instincts are to be satisfied is acquired. With the growth of life and an increase in knowledge and experience, the inner life of the individual becomes more elaborate and complicated. Thus between the ever-changing inner world of man's consciousness and the ever-changing concourse of external nature that adjustment is to be brought into play which may resemble the prenatal adjustment observable in the life of the embryo in relation to the life of its mother. The power of instinct which is reflected in the life of the instinct soon gives way to the life and power of consciousness. Instinct, as it has been wisely remarked by Jung, is Nature and perpetuates Nature; while consciousness can only seek its culture or denial. "Even when we turn back on Nature," says he, "inspired by Rousseauesque longing we cultivate nature. As long as we are submerged in nature we are unconscious and live in the security of instinct that knows no problems. Everything

in us which belongs to Nature shrinks away from a problem; for its name is doubt and wherever doubt holds sway there is uncertainty and the possibility of divergent ways. And where several ways seem possible there we have turned away from the certain guidance of instinct and are handed over to fear, for consciousness is now called upon to do that which Nature has always done for her children—namely, to give a certain, unquestionable and unequivocal decision. . . It is the sacrifice of the natural man—of the unconscious ingenious being whose tragic career began with the eating of apple in Paradise. The biblical fall of man represents the dawn of consciousness as curse."

But the dawn of consciousness can be a blessing as well. Whereas the Bible warns by providing, "He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow", the prayer of the last Prophet till his dying day was, "O God! Increase me in my knowledge". By widening and deepening our consciousness we can convert this curse into a blessing. A little learning is a dangerous thing even as it is only the half-truths that are worse than lies. Only by the light of consciousness will a man be able to recover that state of bliss which the life of instinct secures to his children.

If I have not attempted to describe in meticulous detail the psychological transformations which we undergo as we live through the various phases of life's cycle, it is only because all that is not strictly relevant to the point I am making and it would only burden the main argument. Suffice it to say that by taking stock of all these rich and variegated processes of man's inner and outer life, one can reach the conclusion that the *final phase of maturity* which seems to be the *termine of earthly life* consists in this: that the individual who started as a helpless, struggling infant without any awareness either of himself or of his environment, towards the end, acquires a knowledge of reality and learns one supreme lesson of life—never to expect anything of the world which it cannot give. Both with the sage, as well as with the child, relationship with reality

remains one of perfect accord and harmony; the difference being that in childhood the relationship is unconscious, and with the sage it becomes conscious. Both of them are at peace within and without: only the sage has reached a richer harmony by a conscious endeavour and is left in a state of permanent enjoyment of all that there is.

To help the process of transition from this unconscious infantile adjustment to the adjustment of a mature mind within the cosmos, appears to be the goal of all moral effort. Here the adult recovers that harmony between himself and the universe which he lost in the period of infancy, when he first discovered that his wishes were no longer sovereign. In fact, throughout the earthly career of the soul, one notices this longing on the part of man to recover that harmony, a harmony the intimations of which we all carry in our being. The process of maturing, as has been very rightly remarked by Walter Lippmann, consists in a revision of a man's desires in the light of an understanding of reality. To a child, there is nothing for him but his wishes. There are no dreams because there is no perception of independent reality with which those dreams could be contrasted by the infant mind. The infant mind does not know merely because it has no *need to know* anything of the outer world. For the child there are no problems. It is true, his life is a problem for his parents, his educators or his religious teachers. It is only when he grows up and discovers the contrast between what he wants and what he is being denied, that the problems of personal life arise for him. With the emergence of consciousness the moral problem also arises. Soon the bitter experiences that bring him into active conflict with an hostile environment compel the growing child to take notice of the fact that the universe *is not designed to secure the satisfaction of his wishes. And he is then helped to appreciate*, thanks to the increase in his knowledge that *his wishes will not be gratified until and unless he knows how to design intelligent action to adjust himself to the changing environment.* As a child he has no

notion of space or of time. Everything seems to be within his reach. No infant children cry for the moon, despite what we are told in the story where Rama is said to have cried for the moon. They do not cry for the moon because so closely is the child's life intertwined with the outer world that he feels himself one with it. The moon is not outside him so that he might cry for it. It is much later that the sense of space develops and he comes to recognise the difference between 'here' and 'there'. Soon he realises, how very, very small, and helpless he is in relation to the external world. He comes to acquire knowledge of death, of decay and destruction of the things he sees. He even comes to know that the mood in which he is at any given moment will soon fade away yielding place to another. He begins to distinguish between yesterdays and tomorrows. Simultaneously with this knowledge comes the awareness that there are other aspiring individuals in the world besides himself, and that .they, too, have their preferences; they too have their desires to be gratified.

Either, then, man, who is thrown into this predicament, *will flee from reality and take refuge* in some imaginatively created condition of mind, or he will try to understand it, and seek fusion with it. The first is the negative and the second is the positive attitude to life. There is, however, no such thing as fleeing from reality in the *absolute sense.* We are all slaves and we cannot easily escape the grip of a world we did not create. Servitude, in a sense, is the supreme law of Life. In a limited sense, however, men have designed some methods whereby they secure temporary relief; the taking of intoxicating drugs and the seeking of refuge in daydreams, are some such methods. But in the end man cannot escape from himself. That is the last tie that will bind him to earth, because, until he acquires his salvation by a process of personal effort, he will remain on the earth, earthy, and will not be able to elude its hold on himself. Therefore, in the absolute sense, there is no such thing as running away from life.

But there is a sense in which the negative attitude, of asceticism, or renunciation has a value: it can, says Walter Lippmann, be recommended as a method of overcoming immaturity. The ascetic discipline can be a form of *education*. Where the natural growth and development is arrested, where the expansion and the improvement of the mind does not keep pace with the biological evolution in the life of an individual it becomes necessary to subject oneself to the Law of restraint till, "with the maturing of the personality the tortures of renunciation and of prohibition cease to be necessary". Ascetism is not a creed: it is of use only as a temporary measure for the education of the soul: but when the process of artificial checks and restraints has succeeded in harmonising the desire with reality, it ceases to be any longer necessary.

The only attitude which can be defended in principle is the positive one: that is, of understanding reality, of becoming detached, and becoming aware of one's limitations. In the end, of course, that understanding which helps a man to adjust himself to reality and thus *save* himself creates a different environment in which can be lived a new life altogether. All understanding is a creative phenomenon: when you understand a psychological process you are no longer its slave. A trained musician hears *that* in music which we do not hear at all. A trained critic of art discovers *that* in art which is not open to us to see. A penetrating intellect, a profound understanding, while dealing with reality, transforms it. Thus it is the transforming influence of creative understanding that fashions a new world for man, a world where he may hope to find some refuge from the Empire of Fate.

Human character is a complicated thing. Unless a man is guided by wise education, there is, as a rule, no uniform development of his personality; only a few elements in his character are developed, whereas others are retarded. And the tragedy of life is that "not infrequently we participate in the enterprises of an adult with the mood and

manner of a child". All that a wise education can do is to help us to secure the harmony of the inner with the outer life, and not let the disposition natural to the child remain that of a child, although the child itself has grown into an *adult* with the efflux of time. "When a child's mind is carried into an adult environment" says Mr. Lippmann, the result is a radically false valuation of that environment." Such a child-like mind encompassed in an adult frame construes the world as a place where a 'sinister conspiracy is afoot to make him miserable.' Death and decay are felt as though they were insults administered by an alien and hostile environment; a kind of mischief inherent in the nature of things which would not be there if everything only behaved as good little boys believe it should. It is men possessed of infantile minds who always grow weary, pine and moan for things which they never can hope to reach. The really evolved mind accepts things as they are. It sees things in their proper perspective. It is itself aware of its own limitations. Much of the misery and suffering that one notices in the world is to be accounted for in terms of this assertion, namely: that men find themselves in a world for which they are not *inwardly* prepared. They bring with them standards of judgment which are peculiar to infantile minds, and they refuse to see life steadily and as a whole.

I have, in the foregoing discussion, assumed that the ethical imperative is capable of being formulated and applied to the several situations of life, with reference to, and in terms of, some well defined general principle. For instance, I have said that the endeavour on the part of a moral agent should be to secure its adjustment to, and realize its unity with, the world of Reality as it is disclosed to us upon an objective appreciation of our position in the scheme of things. I have also contended that it is possible for each one of us to establish a proper and harmonious relationship with Reality through the deliverance of knowledge. But it is necessary to point out, that in its application to the various stages of our life, this broad principle is capable of

demanding from us conformity to different, and at times completely contradictory, codes of behaviour. This has also been pointed out by Jung, who says, "For a young person it is almost a sin—and certainly a danger—to be too much occupied with himself; but for the aging person it is a duty and a necessity to give serious attention to himself." It should be observed that a different style of life becomes appropriate to the different seasons that surround and take possession of our being. There is the dawn, the morning, the noon, the afternoon, the twilight and the evening of life. At each different stage of life we must learn to discard the old forms in which the moral law presented its injunctions and accept new ones in their place. "Whoever," says Jung, "carries over into the afternoon the law of the morning—that is the aims of nature—must pay for so doing damage to his soul just as surely as a growing youth, who tries to salvage his childish egoism must pay for this mistake with social failure." Human nature presents too complex a problem to admit of a single and unalterable solution being declared valid for all time. In order that life be lived earnestly and all its possibilities thoroughly exhausted, we must courageously face all the varying demands that it imposes upon us throughout its course—starting from early infancy and concluding with a second childhood, namely, extreme old age. There are some persons who unwisely emphasise the value of *one* of the many stages of life, and hold it aloft as though it were paramount; for instance, they consider youth as the only important phase of life and do not seem to see that the other phases of life are equally important. In order that youth may be *properly* lived you have fully to line through the portals of childhood. All precocious growth, on this account, endangers the future possibilities of life for the simple reason that the nature will not let itself be hurried through. 'Life' must live through its preordained phases fully before it could be said to have qualified itself for exhausting the possibilities of the succeeding

phases. Those persons, who do not live their childhood fully, when old, begin to pine and yearn for a return to the life of a child. But this desire on their part is vain and foolish for the obvious reason that the movement of life cannot be put in the reverse gear, and we cannot possibly recover what is irrecoverably lost.

It is these considerations which compel us to acknowledge that the problem of life cannot be satisfactorily tackled by an appeal to any one general principle. As has been said, the equation of life cannot be settled in terms of algebra: you must substitute for yourself your own constants in place of the generalities indulged in by ethical philosophers and get the answer which would solve the peculiar problem of your individual life. In an essential aspect, therefore, there is no such thing as 'practical' philosophy of life—what you require is not so much *knowledge* as *wisdom*, not so much the perception of the mystery of life as the capacity to apply to the practical details of day to day living, the universal principles of conduct—thus reducing the ethical imperative in relation to each specific stage and formation of life to a rule of wise and noble conduct. Our thought-life is no doubt capable of yielding to us sufficient light wherewith to steer our way clear of the numerous possibilities of action which disclose themselves to us when we are faced with the problems of choosing the kind of action which would result in the fulfilment of the task of our life. But, despite that tribute which could be paid to the omnipotence of the power of human thinking, there are obvious limitations which need not be lost sight of. It is, in fact, to this aspect of the matter that Jung calls our attention over and over again. He says:—

"Do we ever understand what we think? We only understand that thinking which is a mere equation, and from which nothing comes out but what we have put in. That is the working of the intellect. But beyond that there is a thinking in primordial images—in symbols which are older than historical man; which have been ingrained in him from

earliest times, and, eternaliy living, outlasting all generations, still make up the groundwork of the human psyche. It is only possible to live the fullest life when we are in harmony with these symbols; wisdom is a return to them. It is neither a question of belief nor of knowledge, but of the agreement of our thinking with the primordial images of the unconscious."

It is the province of wisdom to broaden man's outlook on the ultimate questions of life, to give to him a catholicity of approach, to enable him to understand the human situation and to assist him to practice for himself the gospel of heroic and noble living. And for doing all this mere book learning is not enough. You must have faith and trust that the Higher Power will guide you to your goal. In fact, Santayana says the same thing when he sings:—

"Our knowledge is a torch of smoky pine
That lights the pathway but one step ahead
Across a void of mystry and dread
Bid, then, the tender light of faith to shine
By which alone the motal heart is led
Unto the thinking of thought divine.

In order that our "will" may successfully enable us to reach our goal, the light of knowledge must disclose to us our pathway to it. But then we cannot reasonably insist that we should see the entire way that leads up to our destination, before we should decide to traverse such portion of it as has been disclosed to us by human knowledge which in the words of Santayana is—"a torch of smoky pine that lights the pathway but one step ahead". Nobody ever stopped walking merely because he could not survey in one glance the entire road leading up to his goal. Here, as elsewhere, we must have faith: we must trust that after we have actually taken—say the first ten steps along the narrow stretch of the pathway that we discern in the light of our limited knowledge, we will see the way further up. The goal of ethical endeavour is thus not to be conceived of as being realizable in the far-off distant time: the proximate ends

are as much to be devotedly pursued as the ultimate end. If we lose sight of the ultimate end, we lose the perspective; but in order that we may reach the ultimate goal we have to walk with our gaze firmly fixed on the proximate ends. Thus, step by step, are we led forward. It is not altogether true to say (as the old adage would have us believe) that where there is a will there is away. Without light of some kind there can be no way for the will to traverse. There is also for the same reason no fundamental difference between the "ends" and the "means". An unethical means cannot promote an ethical end. You may as well expect a lie to serve the truth, as to believe that false means can justify true ends.

1950

The body of true religion consists, to be sure, in obedience to the will of the Soverign of the world, in a confidence in His declarations, and in imitation of His perfection.

EDMUND BURKE

* * * *

Man is miracle in nature. God
Is the one miracle to Man. Behold
"There is God" thou sayest. Thou sayest well
In that thou sayest all.

JEAN INGELOW

* * * *

I am restless for far away things
My soul goes out in a longing to touch the skirt of the dim distance
O Great Beyond, O the Keen Call of Thy flute
I forget, I forget that I have no wings to fly
That I am bound in this spot ever more

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

* * * *

O' what a glory doth this world put on
For him who, with a fervent heart, goes forth
Under the bright and glorious sky and looks
On duties well performed, and days well spent
For him the wind, ay, and the yellow leaves
Shall have a voice and give him eloquent teaching.

LONGFELLOW

REVERENCE

While talking of, what he called, "The building up of the younger generation," Carlyle in his inaugural address delivered at Edinburgh on April 2, 1866, emphasised the role which the sentiment of reverence plays in the development of human character. He refers to that passage in *Wilhelm Meister's Travels* where this aspect of the problem of human education has been discussed by Goethe in a striking manner.

Here is that passage—

"Three of the wisest men discoverable in the world have been got together, to consider, to manage and supervise, the function which transcends all others in importance—that of building up the young generation so as to keep it free from that perilous stuff that has been weighing us down, and clogging every step—which function, indeed, is the only thing we can hope to go on with, if we would leave the world a little better, and not the worse, of our having been in it, for those who are to follow.

"The Chief, who is the eldest of the three, says to Wilhelm: Healthy well-formed children bring into the world with them many precious gifts; and very frequently these are best of all developed by Nature herself, with but slight assistance, where assistance is seen to be wise and profitable, and with forbearance very often on the part of the overseer of the process. But there is one thing which no child brings into the world with him, and without which all other things are of no use!

"Wilhelm, who is there beside him asks: 'And what is that?'

"All want it," says the Eldest, "perhaps you yourself."

"Wilhelm says: 'Well, but tell me what is it?'

"'It is,' answers the other, 'Reverence (*Ehrfurcht*); Reverence.'"

Carlyle's own comment on that word "Reverence" is that it is "Honour done to those who are greater and better than ourselves; honour distinct from fear. *Ehrfurcht;* the soul of all religion that has ever been among men, or ever will be."

There is emphasis, it will be noticed, on three distinct aspects of the meaning of the term 'Reverence'—(a) that Reverence is "honour done to those who are greater and better than ourselves"; (b) that it is 'honour distinct from fear': in other words, it is a feeling of respect which flows from an inward recognition on our part of the worth and dignity of all that is good and great in life; and finally, (c) that it is "the soul of all religion that has ever been among men or ever will be".

A man who can realize the truth of these observations would, in my opinion, be inwardly free. It is only the narrow-minded, conceited and self-centered person who is really in bondage; for such a man knows no law except the pressure of a blind and mechanical habit which demands obedience to every passing whim or fancy. Our liberty does not consist in being absolutely free from all determinations: wisely understood, our freedom consists in a voluntary obedience to the universal law of life. A man who does not acknowledge the authority of those who are greater and better than himself, has not evolved beyond the animal stage of life's evolution: such a man is too much involved in the cob-webs of the mere animal will-to-live. Nor does such a person know happiness in the real sense of that word; and if he persists in shutting himself up against the liberating influence of the higher graces of life, he will sooner or later come to realize the futility of pursuing the mere momentary impulses of his 'biologic-being'. The seed must give up its individuality, if it is to live as a flower: renunciation is the only

road to fulfilment. In acknowledging the value of the higher forms of the manifestation of Spirit, we are only affirming the claim of the law of our own development. We must accept that what we renounce, or what we give away, we retain, and what we are eager to hold, we have already lost. "Just as," says Albert Schweitzer, "the wave cannot exist for itself but is ever a part of the heaving surface of ocean, so much I never live my life for itself but always in the experience which is going all round me. It is an uncomfortable doctrine which the ethic whispers into my ears. You are happy it says; therefore you are called upon to give much. Whatever more than others you have received in health, natural gifts, working capacity, success, a beautiful childhood, harmonies, family circumstances, you must not accept as being a matter of course. You must pay a price for them. You must show more than average devotion to life."

Reverence for parental authority, for the authority of our mentors, for the authority of society as embodied in its social norms, moral standards, traditions and civic laws, are but illustrations of that general principle of what Carlyle calls 'reverence to those who are greater and better then ourselves'. We cannot transcend the limitations of our being except by acknowledging them, and the only way to acknowledge them is to recognize and to respect those around us who reflect the higher truth and obey the higher law. The essential pre-requisite for our evolution is the adoption of this attitude of Reverence; and, as this is the very starting point of all urge to moral and spiritual regeneration, and is the very foundation of our longing to escape those restraints and compulsions of blind prejudices peculiar to man, Goethe very rightly emphasises that no education is possible for a person unless he has adopted, to begin with, this basic attitude to the problem of his personal life. "Man," says Goethe, "does not willingly submit himself to reverence; or rather he never so submits himself: it is a higher sense which must be communicated to his

nature; which, in some peculiarly favoured individuality, unfolds itself spontaneously, in persons who on this account have been looked upon as saints and divine." In other words, the inculcation of the sentiment of reverence is a matter of paramount importance. And I would hasten to add: if it has been, due to some evil influence, lost, nothing can bring it back to you—for in the wise words of the Bible, "If the salt shall have lost its savour wherewith shall it be salted?"

Mere book learning, the ability to be an engineer, a doctor or a lawyer, or the mere capacity to engage oneself profitably in what is called "the business of the world" are valuable attainments indeed, but they, by no means, are enough to enrich our humanity, or to advance our evolution. They do not help us in the realization of our destiny. The trouble with our present system of education consists precisely in this that adequate emphasis is not being laid upon the recognition of the role that the sentiment of reverence plays in the building up of human personality. The culture of the sentiment of reverence is neglected in our schools. The result is that our children and our young men seldom or never, except of course, in mere bulk—grow; they only become aggressive and rebellious as they advance in years.

We have come to accept uncritically the belief that in order to call ourselves wise we must denounce our ancestors as fools. The rebellious spirit is applauded as being something heroic and salutary, and the surrender of oneself in awe to the authority of those who are in charge of our affairs is considered to be the hallmark of a dull and diseased soul. We are being cautioned against allowing our children to be crushed by the dead weight of tradition and, in fact, it is the practice of this gospel which, in my opinion, constitutes the greatest danger to our society, and unless it is effectively combated, things will go wrong beyond repair.

To illustrate what I understand by "Honour as distinct

from fear", I will recall for my audience one of the most memorable incident from the history of ancient Greece.

Socrates, as is well-known, was condemned in the year 399 B.C. by the Athenian judges to die by drinking a cup of hemlock. The charges preferred against him by his accusers were that he had been guilty of corrupting the youths of Athens, of having denied the national gods of Athens, and having conspired against the Athenian Government of the day. These were accusations of which, as even his accusers knew, he was completely innocent.

His defence against these baseless charges has been preserved in one of the immortal dialogues of Plato, the *Apologia*. In another dialogue, the *Crito*, we are told by Plato how an old and tried friend visits Socrates in the prison where the latter is awaiting the dawning of the day when he must die and attempts to persuade him to allow his friends to buy off the jailors and arrange for his escape that night to Thessaly, or some other place, where he can live in safety. Socrates, as is well-known, refused to be persuaded to buy his liberty in the manner suggested, and the reason for his refusal was not that he was not convinced that he was innocent, much less that he had been rightly found guilty and convicted by his judges, but that in securing his liberty in this manner, he would have disregarded his obligations to the laws of his country. He said he was convicted by the laws although in *fact* this was through its false professors; and in running away in this fashion he would be laying down a dangerous precedent of breaking the laws and thus undermining their authority. He believed that without unconditional obedience being shown to the Law, it was not possible to secure the continued existence of a well-ordered society.

In fact, in this dialogue, the laws have been personified, and Socrates reproduces what they will say to him in case he disregards their authority.

"Consider, Socrates, if we are speaking truly that in your present attempt you are going to do us an injury.

For, having brought you into the world, and nurtured and educated you, and given you and every other citizen a share in every good which we had to give, we further proclaim to any Athenian by the liberty which we allow him, that if he does not like us when he has become of age and has seen the ways of the city, and made our acquaintance, he may go where he pleases and take his goods with him. None of our laws will forbid him or interfere with him. Anyone who does not like us and the city, and who wants to emigrate to a colony or to any other city, may go where he likes, retaining his property.

"But he who has experience of the manner in which we order justice and administer the State, and still remains, has entered into an implied contract that he will do as we command him.

"And he who disobeys us is, as we maintain, thrice wrong; first, because in disobeying us he is disobeying his parents; secondly, because we are the authors of his education; thirdly, because he has made an agreement with us that he will duly obey our commands; and he neither obeys them nor convinces us that our commands are unjust; and we do not rudely impose them, but give them the alternative of obeying or convincing us; that is what we offer, and he does neither.

"These are the sort of accusations to which, as we were saying, you, Socrates, will be exposed if you accomplish your intention; you above all other Athenians. . .

"Listen, then, Socrates, to us who have brought you up. Think not of life and children first, and of justice afterwards, but of justice first, that you may be justified before the princes of the world below. For neither will you nor any that belong to you be happier or holier or juster in this life, or happier in another, if you do as *Crito* bids. Now you depart in innocence, a sufferer and not a doer of evil; a victim, not of the laws, but of men."

After having recounted this imaginary dialogue between himself and the laws, Socrates concludes by saying:—

"This, dear *Crito*, is the voice which I seem to hear murmuring in my ears, like the sound of the flute in the ears of the mystic; that voice, I say, is humming in my ears, and prevents me from hearing any other. And I know that anything more which you may say will be vain . . .

"Leave me then *Crito* to fulfil the will of God, and to follow whither he leads."

This is reverence for the laws of one's country, and one can well imagine what would happen if the authority and sanctity of the laws were flouted. Disobedience to Authority is the First Sin committed by Man and it is this instinct of rebellion which is eternally at war with the harmonies of Human life.

Of this, listen again to what Carlyle says:—

"True is it that in these days man can do almost all things: only not obey. True likewise that who so cannot obey cannot be free, still less bear rule: he then is inferior of nothing, the equal of nothing. Nevertheless believe not that man has lost the Faculty for Reverence: that if it slumber in him, it has gone dead. Painful for man is that rebellious independence when it has become inevitable; only in loving companionship with his fellows does he feel safe: only in reverently bowing down before the higher does he feel himself exalted."

Education, I believe, is a process co-extensive with life; it is based, as Rabindranath Tagore used to say, not so much on the mechanical law of causation as on the law of personal sympathy. A great teacher is one who is, above everything else, a great Man: he influences his disciples by his being and not by imparting mere information to them. His real function according to Tagore "is not to explain meanings but to knock at the door of the mind". He is to the students what sunshine is to the plants— the very condition of their growth.

The essential condition which enables the student to imbibe the influence of his teacher is completely to surrender himself at the altar of that influence, to respond in a spirit

of "wise passiveness", in short to be reverential. Nor again is this relationship of reverence for his teacher, exclusive and uni-directional; he must learn to revere all that is *around*, *above* and *under* him. He must learn to keep his essential self, his real being in the background; he must reckon everything else as above him. He must let his narrower individuality dissolve itself in a wider synthesis in order that it may thus come to mirror the universal life. The man who is lost in the mists of his personal importance cannot offer to light any transparent medium: instead, he obstructs the passage of that light. And let it not be forgotten, it is with man's soul as with Nature, the beginning of creation is—Light.

The youth of a country is the soil of its Soul—it is there that it finds its roots, thence does its native genius sprout forth and flourish luxuriantly. It is from this soil that the soul of a people draws its nourishment, its individuality, its strength. Every care therefore must be taken to keep this "Soil" of the Soul pure and free—immune from the corrupting taints of a false ideology, favouritism and intrigue.

Let the Young learn to assimilate all the elements of existing knowledge and master the technique of managing the affairs of the world. Let them drill their minds and discipline themselves. But let them also acquire that inward restraint without which the Will in them cannot be kept within proper limits. While it is undesirable, says Goethe, that any man should receive what he has not examined, a far more frequent danger is that of flippant irreverence. Let the young learn to form correct opinions on current questions and let them have the courage, within the limits provided by Law, to express them. But the domain of the practical *realization* of that opinion is not for them. For this, as for numerous other things, they ought to learn to wait for their hour—and meanwhile trust that those who are at the helm of affairs will do their best to keep the vigil, preserve the best that there is in society and hold aloft the banner of national welfare and

social progress. In thus reacting to the social situation they will show that reverence which is due to their elders and to the 'mores' of their day.

The sentiment of Reverence finds its consummate expression in Religious Experience. "Reverence," says Simmons, "is the very first element of religion; it cannot but be felt by everyone who has right views of the Divine Greatness and Holiness and of his own character in the sight of God." I am not talking here of Religion in its institutional aspect: I am considering it as a direct experience of those who are in living communion with the heart-beat of Reality. There are moments when we seem to touch the farthest frontiers of Being and feel as if we are at one with all that is within and without us: and it is in moments such as these that we seem to fulfil some hidden Law of our Being.

Have you not stood, in the silence of the Starry Night, in awe at the Power of Him who called all this wealth of creation to life? The vastness of space, in whose boundless void whirl countless stars; the very endlessness of the stretch of time in which we find ourselves so tightly wedged,; nay the very multitudinous forms in which the mystery of 'Being' reflects itself—comprehend these if you can, and you will feel the truth of what Carlyle's contemplation of the mystery of our existence led him to express :—

"O Heaven, it is mysterious, it is awful to consider that we not only carry each a future Ghost within us; but are, in very deed, 'Ghosts'! These limbs; whence had we them; this stormy Force; this life-blood with its burning Passion? They are dust and shadow; a Shadow-system gathered round our ME; wherein, through some moments or years, the Divine Essence is to be revealed in the Flesh. That warrior on his strong war-horse fire flashes through his eyes; force dwells in his arm and heart; but warrior and war-horse are a vision; a revealed Force, nothing more. Stately they treat the Earth, as if it were a firm substance; fool! the earth is but a film; it cracks in twain, and

warrior and war-horse sink beyond plummet's sounding. Plummets? Fantasy herself will not follow them. A little while ago, they were not; a little while, and they are not, their very ashes are not.

"So has it been from the beginning, so will it be to the end. Generation after generation takes to itself the Form of a Body; and forth-issuing from Cimmerian Night, on Heaven's mission *appears.* What Force and Fire is in each he expends; one grinding in the mill of Industry; one hunter-like climbing the giddy Alpine heights of Science; one madly dashed in pieces on the rocks of Strife, in war with his fellow—and then the Heaven-sent is recalled; his earthly Vesture falls away, and soon even to Sense becomes a vanished Shadow. Thus, like some wild-flaming, wild-thundering train of Heaven's Artillery, does this mysterious *mankind* thunder and flame, in long-drawn, quick succeeding grandeur, through the unknown Deep. Thus, like a God created, fire breathing Spirit-host, We emerge from the Inane; haste stormfully across the astonished Earth; then plunge again into the Inane. Earth's mountains are levelled, and her seas filled up, in our passage; can the Earth, which is but dead and a vision, resist Spirits which have reality and are alive? On the hardest adament some footprint of us is stamped-in; the last Rear of the host will read traces of the earliest Van. But whence?— O Heaven, whither? Sense knows not; Faith knows not; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery, from God and to God.

"We are such stuff
As dreams are made of and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep!"

One feels dazed while one is in the grip of this cosmic emotion, and one cannot but say: "God is Great, God is Great" . . . This is religious experience *par excellence* and the Sentiment of Reverence is what it is born out of. To live continually in this state of reverence is to live spiritually. Spirituality has no other meaning, no other content.

So much by way of comment on Goethe's exposition of the Philosophy of Reverence. But the richness of the concept of Reverence and its relevance to the development of human personality is not exhausted in the analysis attempted so far. There is at least one more aspect of it which merits, at any rate, a passing reference.

Of old it has been said that "Man has been made in the image of God" and that could he but become aware of his potentialities, he would be able to reflect, in his very own being, the greatness and glory of God—and that, too, to an extent to which the mere non-human world of creation is not able to do. If that be true, is it not owing to man that he should believe in the Gospel of Self-reverence? He must learn to approach his own powers and capacities with as much reverence as is due to the grandeur and majesty of the world around him. If the validity of this view-point be conceded, certain practical implications follow. Man has an obligation cast on him to respect his body. He has to keep it clean, pure, and healthy. Our body is the most important vehicle through which we are to fulfil all the obligations that we owe to the Higher Power. It is a false philosophy which teaches that the mortification of the body is essential in order that the spirit may triumph. The triumph of the spirit is rendered possible only if it has the assistance of a healthy body. The acts of cleaning the body, of giving to it the rest that it deserves, of keeping it in good condition, if approached from a proper perspective, are those duties whose fulfilment constitutes the very essence of prayer. Cleanliness is thus not next to godliness, it is an essential condition before godliness can possibly be attained. Purity, outward and inward, thus becomes the highest ideal.

A man who affirms consciously his obligation to respect himself would find much meaning in the practice of the virtue of humility. True humility does not cast down the individual. It elevates him. The Quran teaches that the real servants of the Merciful Maker are those who walk

humbly on earth. The respect that is due to one's 'self' does not entitle the individual to exult in his own importance. His importance is not a matter of a claim to be exacted or a right to be enforced: it results from the recognition that his emergence as a finite being, as a creature bound up by the limitation of Space and Time, implies the possibility that he is here for a purpose higher than that he can conceive of. His role is to follow the law of his Being and to do the right because it is right, regardless of any immediate unpleasant consequences that may result from the unconditional pursuit of the Right.

I would like to conclude these reflections with those immortal lines of Lord Tennyson, which, for many years now, have been a source of inspiration, comfort and immense help to me.

"Self-Reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to soverign power;
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncalled for), but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And, because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

1951—
From an address to Students

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few are to be chewed and digested.

BACON.

I believe, if the truth were known, men would be astonished at the small amount of learning with which a high degree of culture is compatible. In a moment of enthusiasm I ventured once to tell my English set that if they could really master the ninth book of *Paradise Lost*, so as to rise to the height of its great argument and incorporate all its beauties in themselves, they would at one blow, by virtue of that alone, become highly cultivated men . . . More and more various learning might raise them to the same height by different paths, but could hardly raise them higher.

JAMES [illegible]

All that mankind has done, thought, gained, or been, it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of Books. They are the chosen possession of men.

CARLYLE.

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few are to be chewed and digested.

BACON.

* * *

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JAMES RHOADES.

* * *

All that mankind has done, thought gained, or been, it is lying as in magic preservation in the pages of Books. They are the chosen possession of men.

CARLYLE.

READING TO SOME PURPOSE.

Reading, like any other human activity, must not be allowed to degrade itself to the dull level of mere mechanicalness but must be directed to some aim, to some well defined purpose. Bacon no doubt said, "Reading maketh a full man": it is obvious, however, that indiscriminate and desultory reading will not only not make a 'full man' but, what is worse, it is likely to impair the full development of his mental powers. 'Reading' may with advantage be compared to 'eating': just as in eating it is not the total intake of the food but the thoroughness of digestion that counts; so also in reading, it is not so much the quantity of the printed words that you devour but the quality of your mental concentration and your capacity at assimilation, that matter. 'There are', says Arnold Bennett somewhere, 'those tireless readers who go every week-end of their lives to the lending library in order to borrow a book: no particular book, no remembered title, no name of the author known, but just 'a book'. These indefatigable readers read more than twenty million words per week and yet, they have some of the emptiest of minds imaginable. The explanation of the perfect vacancy of their mind does not lie in *what* they read; it must lie in *how* they read.'

There are some people who claim to read for the sake of, what they are pleased to call, 'killing the time'. They claim that when they have nothing better to do and do not know what to do with their time, they might just as well read—and read anything that should come handy to them. They are of the opinion that one must read in order to *forget* oneself, in order to *escape* into an airy nothingness and thus lose touch with the ugly realities of life. In short, they take to reading much in the manner in which men take to drinking,

or to the use of narcotics. The device is familiar and the end is to cease to be conscious and to escape into oblivion. There are hundreds and thousands of this class of readers: just before retiring to bed they pick up a book at random and read with no other purpose except to lull themselves into a state of total fatigue, and thus prepare the way for the onset of sleep.

Far from considering this approach to reading as laudable, I have always regarded it as the most indefensible and dangerous habit that can ever overtake a man. This type of reading atrophies the mind, enervates it and ultimately comes to undermine its functions. A man who takes to reading for the mere sake of killing time, will only discover in the end, that time has killed him. The one thing about which one can ever be certain is that *time* cannot be killed. Its passage across our being steadily brings us nearer the end and soon, and alas! only too soon, we slip into the grave and 'are to dust equal made.' In the short interval of time that is allowed to man he is called upon to escape the grip of death, to avoid if he can, accepting grave as the goal of his life. This can be achieved only by becoming increasingly aware and completely conscious of the full potentialities of life. Wakefulness and not sleep seems to be the ideal of life.

A voracious reader who reads from the mere compelling force of habit, and reads only because he has nothing better to do, is seriously interfering with the development of his mental faculties and impeding the evolution of his mental life. Knowledge invigorates life, it makes a man aware of his 'station' and 'duties' and gives him the *ability* to design effective action on the ever-changing concourse of environment. If reading, far from ministering to that purpose of increasing our knowledge, comes to be resorted to as a device for evading that responsibility which is ours here below, it would hardly be an activity worth valuing. Such a type of reading becomes a meaningless activity, involves useless expenditure of human energy, and it succeeds,

in the end, in preventing a man effectively from putting his time to the best possible use.

In order to formulate a proper approach to reading it is desirable, in the first instance, to be clear about the function of literature itself which one is called upon to read. Literature, regarded from the view-point of its basic function, has been very rightly divided into two main categories: (a) the literature of information and (b) the literature of power. The literature of information consists of the objective statements regarding the discoveries made by man about the science and art of living, about the technique of our organized social behaviour, and about the laws that regulate the courses of the natural, moral and the historical order. In the Kantian terminology it consists of empirical, or synthetic judgments. The literature of information, as the term indicates, *informs* you about all that is around you in order that you may be helped to contrive appropriate action for the purpose of securing adjustment of your life with the outer environment in which your lot is cast. The securing of this adjustment is a biological necessity: it is incidental to the whole adventure of our life and the failure to adjust in this sense, as is well-known, ultimately brings about the elimination and extinction of species.

It is the function of education to familiarise a young man with the literature of information so that he is able to absorb and assimilate *that which constitutes the condensed essence of the wisdom of the ages.* Acquisition of knowledge in this sense postulates a capacity to gain admission to that vast store-house of truth and learning which has been steadily growing with the passage of time. Every succeeding generation is to be the custodian and guardian of this heritage of mankind. It is by bringing growing minds into contact with this precious possession of all that our forefathers have felt and found that we shall be able to secure continued transmission of the cultural and intellectual heritage of mankind from generation to generation.

Sharply contrasted with this type of literature is the

literature of *power*. Literature of power helps you to bring yourself in tune with the infinite. It rivets your attention on the eternal verities of life. It directs your attention to the invisible, to the intangible, 'Here beyond', and gives to you a cosmic view-point and develops in you those inner resources of human life with which to appreciate and enjoy life. The entire religious and devotional literature of mankind, all higher poetry and perennial philosophy that subserve this basic function, fall in this category. The literature of power helps you to perceive the relative values of things, it enables you to outgrow the natural limitations of your earthly life. It educates you in the humanities, in that rare art of living well; it lubricates the harsh and rough mechanism of our social life and makes you feel at home in the universe. Bacon referred to Knowledge precisely in this sense when he observed that knowledge is a rich store-house for the glory of the Creator and the relief of man's estate. He was also aware of the two-fold classification of knowledge pointed out earlier; Knowledge of man, he says, is as the waters, some descending from above, and some springing from beneath; the one informed by the *light of nature*, the other *inspired by divine revelation*.

Co-related with these two basic purposes which underlie the making of literature are the two sharply defined attitudes which ought to characterise the reader's approach to the written word. He must be very clear what is he about; he must be earnest about the whole business of reading: he ought to realise that the few minutes or hours that he has been able to steal from his regular employment are going to be invested by him in some sound bank and he ought to be shrewed enough to evaluate in advance what dividends he is going to get out of this investment. He must *read to learn* and to *grow*—to *learn* as much as he can about the *laws* that regulate the courses of events in the natural, historical, social and moral order and he must *grow* in *the spirit*, by enriching his life, by living fully and resolutely the life of the spirit. Every book that he should

pick up for his study ought to assist him in the pursuit of one of these two basic aims. If, however, the book he is reading does not answer any such purpose but appears to be one which is merely designed to beguile him into blind alleys of crude thoughts and perverse beliefs, he ought to be able to have the moral courage to shun it, abhor it and run miles away from it.

The literature of mankind, day by day, is increasing: there is, in our time, a prodigious out-pouring of the printed word. Thanks to the modern press, the number of books, magazines, periodicals and newspapers has reached almost astronomical figures. As life is short and art is long, we are called upon to *choose*; to select *that* which ought to be read by us. This choice is by no means an easy affair. In fine, it is one of the important aims of early education that the teacher should prescribe what the student is to read for himself. This is a matter which requires skill and ability. A wise and judicious selection of books by the teacher can go a long way in saving the time and energy that must ordinarily be spent by the uninitiated in proceeding, by the method of trial and error, to pick up what he must read from the immense pasture of world's literature. A teacher can fulfil his mission by helping the young student in getting at the proper kinds of books; it is for the teacher to implant that early and invincible love of reading in the student, that love of which Gibbon claims that he would not exchange it even for the treasures of India. After a student has been sufficiently long on his way to acquire knowledge and has cultivated acquaintance with the master-minds who have influenced human literature he ought to be able thereafter to choose books for himself.

It must be remembered that in the matter of the choice of books there can be no objective criterion. Each one of us, to begin with, must discover for himself what he is qualified to assimilate. No reader can hope to be like the omnivorous caterpillar that must eat everything that comes its way: each one of us has a certain inner aptitude for certain

specialised aspects of thought and action and it is therefore best to keep loyal to our inborn predilections, to our predisposition and aptitude for acquiring mastery of a given subject. Every thoughtful reader, however, soon comes to find that this domain of subjectivity cannot, for long, monopolise his choice. There are, in fact, books that are books for all, books for all time and books for all occasions. These are the classics: the books that have stood the test of time, books that ought, because of the universality of their appeal, to lie on the shelf of every thoughtful reader. "Your true classic," says Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, "is universal in that it appeals to the catholic mind of man. It is doubly permanent for it remains significant, or acquires a new significance after the age for which it was written and the conditions under which it was written have passed away; and it yet keeps undefaced by handling, the original noble imprint of the mind that first minted it—or shall we say, as generation after generation rings the coin, it ever returns the echo of its father-Spirit?" To read these books is not so much a matter of choice as of duty, arising out of our obligation to share in a common human culture. If you are imbued with the desire of discovering the common denominator of human thinking and feeling then you have to read the classics. It was about these books that Bacon said that they have to be "chewed and digested". The more you go to them the more there is in them for you to go to: each time you have finished reading them, you realise that you have an unsatiable desire to return to them. Continued contact with the classics will act as a prophylactic of our taste. For the superficial reader, of course, even in the classics everything is obvious, but for the really serious student there is, in them, an inexhaustible store-house of inspiration and guidance. Men are awakened from a life of sleep by the love of truth and beauty and it is these classics that kindle the "buried life" in each one of us. I have often wondered if Coventry Patmore had not these very thoughts

in his mind when he wrote—

"Love wakes man, once a life-time each
They lift their heavy lids, and look:
And lo, what one sweet page can teach
They read with joy, then shut the book.
And some give thanks and some blaspheme
And most forget; but either way
That and the child's unheeded dream
Is all the light of all their day."

It is by the wise and judicious reading that you come to discover minds akin to your own: then is established a type of spiritual affinity between the author of the book and the reader, a friendship of a kind which it is hard to form within the limits of ordinary life. Such friendships, in my opinion, are the *only* assets and investments worth going in for. They come to your rescue whenever you are let down by everything else. You feel comforted by the healing influence of great minds; by their touch are awakened in you those powers that normally lie dormant. To have discovered even half a dozen writers as his friends, as kindred spirits, is the highest achievement of which a thoughtful reader can be capable. Let these authors be your lifelong companions and let their books be your bedside books. You should take to them as would a ship wrecked, tempest-tossed, and weather-beaten mariner take to the only life-belt that he might find on the hostile seas wherein he has been thrown by the hand of cruel Fate.

After all, when we sum up the course of our life, say on our death-beds, what is it that we represent to ourselves as being the essence of our life's achievements? A few memories of some rare joyous moments of life lived in the company of those whom we loved or liked; a few heroic decisions we took in siding the right, and in opposing the evil; a few sacrifices we made in order to uphold a higher purpose in preference to a lower one. If this is all that a man can look upon, as being the sum and substance of his life's achievement, nothing can give you that perspective

more than the constant communion with those Master-minds whose testimony backs up this belief, and whose utterances heal all your wordly wounds and inspire you to fight for the ideals that count.

Thus can reading be useful. You may either read for profit or for culture, but in either of those pursuits you must read not to lose yourself but to recover yourself. You must read with the fullness of your being and never with a desire to extinguish your consciousness. Above all, before you attempt to get anything out of the book you must promise to yourself to return the debt in the shape of your own contribution to that very reservoir of wisdom from where you have nourished yourself. You must promise to write not so much for the sake of personal immortality as for the sake of being loyal to the call of the spirit. May I tell you what that call of the spirit is: it is to give, and to give all you have and to give it absolutely and unconditionally. Like the sun of the system you must reach an inner condition where you must go on giving without so much as entertaining a hope of getting anything in return: you must ceaselessly wear yourself out without the hope of a possible reward. And above all, in thus giving light and warmth to all that is around you, you must not be motivated by a desire other than the one of doing your duty. This is the highest categorical imperative. This is the meaning of *Zakat* (poor-rate) at the moral and intellectual level. And to give in the sense I have stressed is the very essence of the *Jehad-i-Akbar*, of that 'higher struggle' of which our Prophet speaks.

Before I close I should like to offer this last comment on the art and value of reading. That advice can be summed up in the words "earnestness" and "humility". Surrunder yourself completely to the voice of him, whose book you have found time to take up in your hands to read. Do not dispute or cavil at what he says. Trust to his influence: as in love, so in reading, faith counts above everything else. There is a sense in which, if you adopt this

attitude, you will be able to get more out of a book than was put into it by its own author. Devotion, loyalty and unqualified reverence for him whose writings you set out to read is really what counts. If the attitude is one of mere desire to dispute, you will not only not get the best out of a book but what is more, you will have once and for ever precluded yourself from seeing the light. Then you would live in the eternal night of darkness and cease to be the citizen of the spiritual world...

It is my prayer that God may guard us all against evil. and help us on to pursue the goals that count and realize the values that matter.

From an Address to Students. (1951).

It is the province of knowledge to speak and it is the privilege of wisdom to listen.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

* * * *

It is by all means necessary to point this out—that the truly eloquent must be free from base and ignoble (or ill-bred) thoughts. For it is not possible that men who live their lives with mean and servile aims and ideas should produce what is admirable and worthy of immortality. Great accents we expect to fall from the lips of those whose thoughts are dignified.

LONGINUS.

* * * *

Nevertheless, there is gulf between a lecture and a real speech. A lecture can be printed and read. While listening to it, there is no need to adopt an attitude different from that required to read a book properly. However interesting a lecturer might be, he is merely a sort of epi-phenomenon of the lecture; he supplements it; and it is possible to do justice to the performance by leaving out—or almost leaving out—the artist. In the case of the orator the presence of his living personality is not only essential—it is all. Oration and no written work can express the totality which is unique and indivisible on every occasion. Hence the answer, I have so often given to those who asked me why I seemed to attach more importance to my speeches than to my writings; it is possible to say more in an hour of authentic discourse than in five hundred pages of a well written book.

COUNT HERMANN KEYSERLING.

THE MAGIC OF THE SPOKEN WORD

Many years ago an English magazine invited its readers to say which was the greater misfortune for mankind to endure—blindness or deafness. From the poll that was taken, it was established on the verdict of an overwhelming majority of the readers that of the two, being deaf was assuredly the greater misfortune to suffer. However startling the verdict of the readers of that magazine may appear to be, the fact remains that the view taken by them of the relative disadvantages of being blind and deaf was a true one indeed. It is the magic of the spoken word, the pathos of the human voice, the melody and harmony of a musical symphony which are invisible to the eye and these cannot reach the human soul if the body it inhabits has lost its sense of hearing.

Then again, is it not the deaf man, as compared to the blind man, who is really lonely? Human intercourse may be possible even through the written word but it is not difficult to realise that the spoken word is more life-like and is indissolubly linked up with that evanescent something which cannot be deciphered from the mere icy-cold script in which it may lie enshrined.

What made Alexander Selkirk's life on the deserted island so awful and tragic to him was its loneliness—loneliness born out of the lack of social intercourse and human company. On that deserted island, he had no living being to talk to, although he had many *things* to see. Notice in the lines that follow the emphasis on that aspect of his life:—

O'Solitude! where are the charms
That Sages have seen in thy face
Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place.

Similarly when Tennyson laments the loss of his dear friend Arthur Hallam, the image he recalls to himself is of his friend's 'touch' and 'voice': the image is not visual :—

"O' for the touch of a vanished hand
And the sound of a voice that is still."

Who is not aware of the power and the charm of the spoken word? It is true to say that the spoken word does not signify the same thing when it is reduced to writing. Is not something of its vitality, warmth and appeal lost in the process? You do not derive the same pleasure or profit by merely reading a speech which you have heard yourself come to you directly from the heart and the soul of the speaker himself. There are, no doubt, speakers whose speeches, when written, seem to gain some added weight but that is essentially because the speaker when he spoke was *only* reading out that which he intended to say although there was no written script in front of him. It is said of Edmund Burke that he bored his audience with his interminably long speeches and that he was appreciated and applauded only after his speeches were read in print by his listeners. But such instances, after all, are very rare indeed and they constitute an exception to the rule that it is not the written but the spoken word that has greater power to influence us.

Ultimately, when you come to think of it, it is the spoken word that has been the most potent factor in influencing the progress of mankind. Imagine the influence of the few words that Heraclitus spoke or the revolution that has been wrought by a few utterances of Socrates, a few sayings of Buddha and the few, indeed very few, moral percepts of Christ ! Have their words not meant much more to mankind than the weary volumes that have been written down to our day on those words by way of a commentary? The eighteen volumes that Herbert Spencer wrote under the caption "Synthetic Philosophy" have not influenced mankind to the extent to which a few sayings of Prophet Muhammad, Moses, Buddha and Christ have.

One of the explanation which may conceivably account for the power of the appeal inherent in the words uttered by these great men is to be traced to the fact that they themselves were profound, highly evolved and completely integrated personalities. The influence our words wield is ultimately dependent upon the depth of the being whence they emanate. Those persons who talk with the tongue in their cheek, as the phrase goes, are hardly able to influence their listeners: for, by and large, the essential thing is not *how* or *what* one says but *who* one is. Subject to this reservation, it is the spoken word which more than anything else, appears to have controlled the very fate of human history. All the important ideological movements that we witness whenever we try to comprehend the grammar of world-history, appear to have primarily and essentially been initiated by the magic of the words spoken by their pioneers in a certain way, with a certain indescribable sort of modulation of 'rhythm', 'tonality', 'silence' and 'harmony'—all achieved, let us say, with a certain expression on one's face. It is these fators which seem to constitute the main driving power behind those words, and these factors cannot be represented through the mere deliverance of the 'written' word. These are those evanescent elements that animate the speech of a truly great orator and these cannot be effectively embalmed and treasured in the written word.

2

It is considerations such as these that render it possible to appreciate the precise significance of the art of speaking itself. What is it that constitutes the essential element in the making of a successful orator or a gifted debator or an engaging conversationalist? It is hard to find an answer to this question, an answer which would be generally accepted. But if I am allowed to offer what I consider, from my point of view, to be the correct answer, it is this: a great speaker is one who is capable of establishing a *direct communion between himself and his audience* to such an extent that

while he is speaking, it is not so much the words he utters that engage the attention of his listeners as the meaning which underlies them. A great speaker manages to see that the perception of meaning becomes the primary phenomenon with his listeners. It is true that this communion is rendered possible only through the words uttered by him but what I am attempting to emphasise is that in the entire process which is at work in linking up the soul of the speaker with that of the listeners, it is the meaning and the continual pursuit of the predominant trains of thought and ideas enshrined in the words that become more important than the words themselves. Just as when we read a book, it is not the letters of the alphabet or the words appearing in the sentences that chiefly engage our attention but it is the meaning that we are in contact with, so also when a great speaker is in action, the words he utters are so light, so transparent that, without any let or hindrance, we are able directly to come into contact with what he is attempting to convey. In short, when a great speaker addresses you, you are able to clearly comprehend what he says without experiencing any strain whatsoever. It is not the load of words or of sounds, it is not even the fire-works of high-sounding metaphors or picturesque epithets but primarily it is the meaning which strikes us in the speeches of the great orators.

How this direct communion is established when a great speaker speaks, cannot possibly be the subject-matter of an intellectual analysis. It is as mysterious as the life itself. In fact, it is not an unusual experience that when a great speaker speaks, we are not so much as aware of anybody speaking or ourselves listening to the speech; there is such a total forgetfulness of these factors that we really come to know that the speaker has spoken only after he has stopped speaking. Then is it that for the first time we become aware that a delightful hour has intervened between the moment he got up to address us and the moment he sat down having finished speaking.

All art is, after all, as A. G. Gardiner says, a device to create the maximum of effect with the minimum of effort: it is the function of art to reveal infinity in one line, and to condense eternity into one moment. "When a Shakespeare lets a handkerchief fall, he freezes our blood, but a Schiller in order to produce half the effect, has to burn the whole town." All great art derives its power from the design and procedure of omitting the unessentials. The point of purpose with every artist is to reveal; to penetrate deep down into the heart of things. The penetrating power of art could be compared with that of the sharp point of a knife: the extent to which it can penetrate into the body of a man does not depend so much upon the pressure with which it is struck, as upon the sharpness of the edge itself: in fact, the effort at thrust would be more if it be blunt.

The art of speaking may, with advantage, be compared to music. In both, the mastery of the means is essential before facility of expression can become possible. But the mastery of the means is, afterall, only a means to an end and an indifferent artist, even if he has acquired the mastery of the means, will not be able to stir you to the depths of your soul. It is only the bad carpenter that complains of his tools and a good workman would be able to establish his claim to being the master of his craft even with indifferent tools although the extent of his perfection in the management of his craft will very much depend upon the quality of his tools. To that extent, a speaker must have command of the language, must be well-versed in the thought content of the age in which he is living and above all, he must learn to cultivate his voice and acquire facility and ease in expressing himself. This mastery of means is for the speaker an essential prelude to his being able to create that effect which we rightly associate with his art.

3

The style and manner of public speaking are certainly important but a far more important factor is to acquire

mastery over the subject-matter of our speech. The ideal today is not the picturesque or exhilarating utterance but sober, precise, objective utterance—you must, in other words, be factually accurate and comprehensive. The art of speaking, as practised by its modern masters, has, as its chief characteristic, the virtue of 'clarity', a quality which can emerge only from the breadth of vision irradiated by depth of feeling. In order to have 'breadth of vision' you must master all the relevant information which is available on a given subject. There has been a prodigious increase in human knowledge and the world itself has become such a small place that we have become, perforce, interested in everything and anything which is happening all over the globe. Gone are those days when we could afford to live our lives in a splendid isolation: today, thanks to the modern press, the radio and other scientific means of establishing communication between different parts of the world, our interest in what is happening in the world is far more keen than ever it was before. All this means that you have to acquire as much grip as you can over the details touching and concerning any subject about which you are called upon to speak. You may have to consult the latest publications on the subject or refer to any encyclopædia that contains the condensed essence of all the relevant information and suggests to you the names of the standard books and treatises on that subject. You must do your best to get as much acquainted with the subject-matter of your address as possible and the more your speech is loaded by well-established facts and inspired by powerful ideas, the more are you likely to impress those who are called upon to judge your value and worth as a speaker.

The debating skill of a speaker finds its real avenue of expression in law courts and legislatures of our country. It is in a law court more than anywhere else that your powers of persuasion are tested to their full measure: it is there that upon your advocacy must depend the fate of somebody's property, liberty, honour and even life. There sits the

Judge willing, nay eager, to understand and uphold the point of view favourable to your client's case and it is for you to place the relevant facts before him and marshal your arguments in such a precise and convincing manner that his mind is compelled to agree with your contentions. Of course, in a court of law, mastery over the principles of law is as much essential as is the mastery over the facts of your case but then, as it has been often remarked, if you master your facts well, the law will take care of itself. Many of the cases in the courts of law are lost merely because the lawyer did not know his facts properly. As to the mastery over principles of law, the Judge, speaking generally, could be expected to come to your rescue because he is as much eager to lay down in his judgment sound propositions of law as you are to have them recognised. But whereas it is for you to present factual aspects of your case in a precise and telling manner, the judge is ordinarily expected to take your statement of the facts at its face value since he is not expected to know so much about the facts of your client's case as you are expected to do.

In a Legislature, however, the atmosphere in which the debate is carried on is vastly different from that which prevails in a court of law. For one thing, in the modern system of party-rule, speeches in Parliament are not so much calculated to inspire conviction in the mind of opposition members as to present the party point of view to the House, and through the House to the Press and the country. Many of the political decisions recorded in the Legislature are taken behind the scenes. Many, if not all, of the decisions taken in the Legislatures are really controlled by what happens to be decided by the majority of members within the ruling Party. Those members of the Legislature who sit on the opposition benches, for instance, have not come there to be convinced and you would be wasting your breath if you made a speech with the intention of convincing them. They are fundamentally opposed to the viewpoint which the members who represent the Party in power

are attempting to establish and they are there to criticise, attack, and if possible to demolish these decisions. But even in the Legislature, everything considered, it would be right and proper for a speaker to know thoroughly the subject-matter of his address and to show a commendable skill in the presentation of his viewpoint: he must address the House in such a manner that he does not weary the audience or unnecessarily burden the records of the Legislature by an empty and incoherent babbling of meaningless words.

In this country, where democratic institutions are the order of the day, there is therefore a great deal of room for the display of the ability and skill of the speaker. From that point of view our judicial procedure is the very best that can be designed under the circumstances and in particular, its chief virtue is that every side to the cause is entitled to be heard to the fullest extent practicable and if you only knew how to put your point of view properly, you are bound not only to win your case but also the applause of those who are interested in establishing proper and healthy standards for the administration of justice in our law courts. When you go to the Legislature you have a far more difficult role to play; but nevertheless if you have cultivated the art of public speaking in your earlier days you are bound to discover that its acquisition stands with you in your hour of need and helps you to perform your public duties properly.

I am not, mind you, referring here to the role which a public speaker plays in the body-politic of our country. In our country the 'art' of oratory has yet to be cultivated. I have not come across many talented 'mass' speakers and such of them as do admittedly hold the field today are there because the better ones have not yet cared to come forward. But even there, if you have been a vigilant watcher of what is happening in the arena of public speaking, you will have noticed that there is discoverable, in the utterances of 'mass' speakers, so much that is cheap, second-rate and useless. Above all, by and large, you will notice that the quality of the speeches they make is so poor that hardly

you would spot in their utterances any new or powerful idea, or detect even the tinge of an uplifting and an exhilarating enthusiasm. This is so because they do not, honourable exceptions apart, speak with the object of informing the public mind and helping it to reach correct conclusions on public questions. They speak, and that too in a vulgar way, just to win the "popular" applause. They do not, in their speeches, supply to people what the people *need* but only what *they want*. They appeal to the superficial layers of their consciousness by shouting highly emotional but nevertheless meaningless slogans, forgeting all along that they are there not merely to incite and misguide but also to inform and instruct. They forget that we are called upon to influence man's mind with wise and sublime words; to help them to focus their attention on all that is 'good' and 'great' in life; to warn them against all that is base and ugly. And all these objectives can be attained provided you have a will to rise above the mere desire to win cheap and vulgar applause. You have to chasten the public taste, correct it, guide it, purify it.

4

In order that you may be able, by your speeches, to stir the souls of men to their depths you should yourself have a noble soul to call your own. You must serve the higher cause of truth and never say or do anything merely because it is going to win you temporarily a cheap applause. In thinking of what is durable and valuable, we must listen, as Emerson teaches us, to what the *ages* say against the *hours*. We must learn to build on the foundation of the eternal verities of life and not let ourselves be possessed by those evil and monstrous forces which appeal to us under the garb of pleasant and praiseworthy motives but which, in reality, are only trying to side-track us from the right path of our duty and devotion to the higher graces of life.

In short, I beseech you, to understand that greater the man, the richer the quality of his soul, and higher the level

of life he has reached, the greater is bound to be his appeal and more lasting the effects of any words that he should wish to utter. There is, as we say, no power of persuasion in the words of an insincere or perfidious person. The man who is lacking in conviction in regard to all that he is uttering can never convince others. Such a man is only wagging his tongue, at best exercising his vocal chords or only giving trouble to his lungs; such a man will not, in any sense, move the hearts of his listeners. Of such persons then, less said the better. They cannot create any durable and lasting effect. No matter what they say, or how they say—they, because of the poor quality of their soul, will remain where they are. This, incidentally, explains why so much of preaching that we are witnessing today does not produce results that might be deemed commensurate with the appeals and outbursts of their authors. How can they, who are themselves lost, help; how can they, who never have practised what they preach, be effective!

Nobility of character, in my way of thought, is the highest possession. Blessed are those who are possessed of it—for they shall be the liberated ones, and what is more, they alone shall lead. Here I am referring only to those who utilise this rare gift of God to man, namely, the power of speaking, in the service of a higher cause; men who are anxious to employ this great gift of God for the purpose of educating and elevating those who are around them. Such men are rare indeed, but though rare, they are the men who matter most in human history.

While we are on this point I would like to quote to you a passage from that famous essay of Longinus on "Sublime," an essay in which he reports a conversation between himself and Terentianus: the thoughts that he expresses therein are of a high quality indeed and although his words reach us down these seventeen centuries, they are as fresh and significant as though they were uttered only the other day:—

" 'It remains' (Longinus says) 'to clear up, my dear Terantianus, a question which a certain philosopher has

recently mooted. I wonder,' he says, 'as no doubt do many others, how it happens that in our time there are men who have the gift of persuasion to the utmost extent and are well fitted for public life, and are keen and ready, and particularly rich in all the charms of language, yet there no longer rise really lofty and transcendent natures unless it be quite peradventure. So great and world-wide a dearth of high utterance attends our age. Can it be,' he continued, 'we are to accept the common cant that democracy is the nursing mother of genius, and that great men of letters flourish and die with it? For freedom, they say, has the power to cherish and encourage magnanimous minds, and with it is disseminated eager mutual rivalry and the emulous thirst to excel. Moreover, by the prizes open under a popular government, the mental faculties of orators are perpetually practised and whetted, and as it were, rubbed bright, so that they shine free as the state itself. Whereas to-day,' he went on, 'we seem to have learnt as an infant-lesson that servitude is the law of life; being all wrapped, while our thoughts are yet young and tender, in observances and customs as in swaddling clothes, bound without access to that fairest and most fertile source of men's speech (I mean Freedom) so that we are turned out in no other guise than that of servile flatterers. And servitude (it has been well said) though it be even righteous, is the cage of the soul and a public prison-house.'

"But I answered him thus.—'It is easy, my good sir, and characteristic of human nature, to gird at the age in which one lives. Yet consider whether it may not be true that it is less the world's peace that ruins noble nature than this war illimitable which holds our aspirations in its fist, and occupies our age with passions as with troops that utterly plunder and harry it. The love of money and the love of pleasure enslave us, or rather, as one may say drown us body and soul in their depths. For vast and unchecked wealth marches with lust of pleasure for comrade, and when one opens the gate of house or city, the other at once

enters and abides. And in time these two build nests in the hearts of men, and quickly rear a progeny only too legitimate: and the ruin within the man is gradually consummated as the sublimities of his soul wither away and fade, and in ecstatic contemplation of our mortal parts we omit to exalt, and come to neglect in nonchalance, that within us which is immortal.' "

5

It would be useful to offer, in this context, some advice and guidance to those who are engaged in the cultivation of the art of public speaking.

First of all, you must not speak unless you have something to say, for speaking is not the same thing as making noise. Incoherent babbling or the wagging of the tongue is not the same thing as speaking. It is easy to create a noise which may resemble the dull rattling of a chain or the tinkling of numerous bells strung together on a common string: but that is not speech. You need not talk unless you have something to say; let your speech be loaded with meaning and, in fact, let the meaning of what you have to say be the primary thing on which your own attention is riveted while you are yourself engaged in speaking. Your endeavour is not to merely utter words but to suggest meanings. Speaking becomes a spiritual experience for the listener provided you could approach it from that angle.

From this it follows that there is cast on the speaker an obligation to be clear. He must avoid being obscure, misty and vague. The important thing is to economise the human effort in the pursuit of those trains of thought that you are attempting to release in your speech. It is useful to follow some order in the unfolding of your ideas on a given subject—the order might be a natural order in the sense that it is dictated by logical or psychological necessity. In the narration of a sequence of events, you might do well to follow a chronological order. If the subject-matter is incapable of being treated in any other order, then at least

follow the arithmetical order of stating your points serially. This method will help the audience to follow up what you have to say, point by point, without experiencing that feeling of fatigue that must necessarily result if their mind is bombarded by all conceivable points that you might wish to make in relation to a particular aspect of the subject under discussion.

Obscurity of expression often results from obscurity of thought: it is not infrequently observed that people who are suffering from confusion of thought are fond of dabbling in mystifying phraseology in order to cover it up. Of course, sometimes it pays to be obscure—as for instance, when you are engaged in conducting diplomatic negotiations and in particular, when you have no case to put up on a point which has been urged by the other side. Similarly, as a practising lawyer I found it sometimes useful to indulge in some manner of abstruse and highly involved elliptical verbiage in order to engage the attention of the Bench and thus gain time in order that my *real self* might, in the meanwhile, discover an answer to the knotty point that had been raised by the Bench for my answer. But these cases apart, for a public speaker ever to take shelter in obscurity of expression is an unpardonable sin. He has no business to waste the time of his listeners unless he has something clear-cut to say.

I am against speeches which are delivered in order to *impress* the listeners with one's mastery of words: decorative speeches of this kind can win you no lasting applause for they tend to be dull and boring. By all means use in your speeches ornamental expressions but let these be an embroidery to heighten the effect of the substance of your speech but never a substitute therefor. Mr. Asquith rendered a great service to the art of oratory and eloquence when he furnished in his speeches a model of simple, chaste and concrete expression: in each case every speech of his was a reasoned consideration of the case which he was advocating. Whether he was speaking in the House of

Commons or giving a discourse on any subject of general interest, he never used a word too many. Every fact was placed at its most appropriate place and there was no overlapping and no repetition in the stressing of any aspect of an argument which he was engaged in developing. While *he* spoke, he managed to let the subject speak to the listener direct and for his part, he gave an appearance of being a disinterested spectator of the fate of the whole argument. In a word, he was impersonal and detached. He was completely self-posessed and, therefore, was most effective. This type of oratory has become the model of excellence for our age—an age where the desire to impress is practically synonymous with the desire to persuade and convince. With us the ideal is to utter the strong, simple and concrete word, the word that may exactly fit the case and the mood. The day when Demosthenes' oratorical flourishes used to provoke applause is doomed never to return. We have no time for dabbling in those types of harangues and rhetorical purorations in which the orators of antiquity were so well-versed. With us the din, the noise and bustle of the work-a-day world is so much that we are already over-fatigued when we go to listen to a lecture. We expect co-operation from our public speakers in the sense that there should be, what I have described earlier, an absence of strain on our part to assimilate that which they are attempting to convey to us.

One useful method of redeeming the dullness of a speech is to punctuate it by recounting anecdotes, personal episodes and if possible, humorous stories and jokes. There are some short stories which come handy on occasions and illustrate the point far more effectively than the heaps of sentences that can be recklessly hurled by the speaker at his audience. But here it is important to note that these stories and anecdotes will redeem the dullness of your speech only if they are short and relevant. The modern mind will never be in a mood to forgive an irrelevant argument much less an irrelevant anecdote which is dished up for the consumption

of the audience for no other reason than this, that the speaker felt that he should evade his obligation not to say what he had undertaken to say. But as between being dull and being irrelevent if the choice were open to you, I would advise you to be irrelevent but never dull. As it has been rightly said: 'It is better to be flippant than to be dull'. This is the audacious advice for those who have no other choice but to be either dull or irrelevant.

One useful method of being effective in the marshalling of an argument is *to concede as much of your adversary's case as possible.* Pick out the most vulnerable link in the entire chain of your adversary's reasoning: concentrate on it and with all the force and vigour of your dialectical skill see that the attention of your audience and adversary is riveted on that point while you are engaged in exposing its fallacious and illogical character. Above all, never use superlatives; avoid, as far as possible, a direct expression of your personal opinion: for instance, never say directly that, your opponent has no case, that what he has said is a truism or that what he has urged is baseless. Let that be the job of your audience to say after they have heard you. Analyse the argument of your opponent and compel the mind of the audience to wean itself away from the opinion which has been asserted by your adversary. What is wanted from you is not what your opinion of the adversary's case is. That opinion has to be formed by your listeners. You are to help the formation of that opinion and the best way to do that is to get to the job of stating, as precisely as you can the reasons which, in your opinion, ought to incline any rational mind to disown the opinion you are attempting to expose.

As to the delivery of your speech, it is useful to recall some well-known maxims on the point: one of them is: Be sure that you are heard. Next, be silent rather than be inaudible. And finally, pray never *shout.* People have collected to listen to you and they will carry a very poor opinion of your performance if you attempted to make up

for the substance of your speech by the mere magnitude of your sound. Shouting leads to exhaustion not only of the wind-pipe, but of your lungs too, for it is they that have to bellow hard to eject the words out of you. The matter does not end there: this exhaustion overtakes even your listeners, for the adverse effect on their nerves in consequence of the shouts you are raising, is so obvious that the necessity of its avoidance needs no emphasis.

A word about the *speed* with which you should speak. Here, as elsewhere, the golden rule is that there is no golden rule. The speed must vary with the movement and the tempo of your thoughts. In the development of any argument there is a see-saw game going on between the mind of the listener and the mind of the speaker. It is a part of prudence to limit it on either side, by making the thought-movement neither too slow nor too swift. Let every argument be stated with a natural rhythm. You must move slow in parts that need a steady comprehension on the part of your audience. Once you have prepared them inwardly to anticipate what the whole drift of your argument has been inviting them to accept, then is the time ripe to strike, like the lightning in the dark. Speed in delivery then creates an effect all its own. There are some speakers who cannot afford to go slow for the simple reason that the argument that they are developing has a swiftness about it. The expression and the meaning must run parallel and at times too slow a movement contributes to the dullness of speech and creates an atmosphere in which the listener relaxes and quietly withdraws from the lecture room leaving merely his body behind. In the delivery, grace is what counts above everything else and here no practical hints are possible.

I have never been able to forgive those people who in the name of public speaking manage to read from a written manuscript what it was intended that they should say without any such assistance. They are the most tedious, the most dull type of public speakers I know and I have often

wondered why they should not be catagorised as 'public readers' instead of 'public speakers'. It is impossible to defend this category of 'public readers'. If you cannot speak, you must not substitute this deficiency by merely trying to read what somebody else may have written. You may as well get copies of it cyclostyled, hand these over to your audience and quietly withdraw.

I quite conceive of cases, and they are generally the ceremonial occasions, when some lasting tributes are expected to be paid. In those cases, of course, you cannot help but write what you have to say. In an important political speech, in order that you may not say anything impolitic and get involved into violent controversy or in order that you might successfully avoid the possibility of getting completely unhinged while you are in the grip of some emotion and thus say away things which it is not proper that you should say, it is a useful device to read from a written paper. These, I say, are extreme cases and they have certain special features which enable suffering mankind to put up with them. But how can you defend the type of speaker who must invariably read out what he has written and, whose performance even at reading is so poor that he cannot even correctly read what he has written. Such a public bore would often be noticed lifting his eyes off the paper he is reading from, in order to mark what his audience is thinking of his fate!

The last hint which I would like to give to the public speaker is that he should know when to stop; and in fact it is the disregard of this rule that has brought about the ruin of the reputation of many a budding speaker. It is true that when you come to develop an argument in a law court or in the Legislature no time-limits can be imposed for then the length of your address depends upon the nature of the subject-matter. But if you are, let us say delivering an address to University students, the essential thing for you to remember is that the time at the disposal of your listeners is as much limited as is their patience.

6

The power and appeal of the spoken word finds its highest manifestation in the art of conversation. There are some gifted people who are born conversationalsits. They are the very life and soul of the company; like the sun of the solar system they radiate light and warmth wherever they go. But such engaging and entertaining conversationalists are very rare indeed. . .

Of course, it takes two to make conversation. There are some people who monopolize the conversation and it is, in their case, only too true to say that they do not so much participate in a conversation as indulge in a soliloquy. I am also of the opinion that if there are persons more than two, conversation dwindles into a mere competition to secure the right to be heard. As is well known, two is company, three is none.

A gifted conversationalist, by his very presence, is able to create a type of psychic atmosphere in which even the less gifted become quick with thoughts and acquire an unusual capacity for adding to the value and joy of conversation. A great conversationalist in the words of Shakespeare is like Falstaff, 'not so much a wit in himself as a cause of wit in others'. Like the proverbial mid-wife, he helps the delivery of thoughts from others and if at all he speaks, it is only to create an impression that he knows only too well how to say clearly what the other fellow is struggling to express.

A great public speaker may not be a great conversationalist and *vice versa*. This is so because different capacities and different talents are required in the two modes of exploiting the magic of the spoken word.

Emerson says somewhere that the best of life is revealed in conversation. If at all you want to catch a glimpse of the total image of human mind, you would do well to discover it in the words of a great conversationalist. Whereas for a public speaker there is some manner of distance between himself and his audience, a great conversationalist is

in intimate contact with the soul of the person with whom he is conversing. This is so because he can make him react to what he is saying and find out what is passing in his mind and succeed in giving a fresh turn and direction to the entire life and course of conversation. Free conversation with a friend, says Hume, is what I prefer to any other entertainment. "A single conversation across the table with a wise man," according to Longfellow, "is better than ten years' study of books."

It is very difficult to offer any practical hints or formulate rules by compliance with which one might improve one's capacity for being an engaging and an entertaining conversationalist. The practice of this art is a matter so personal to each one of the great conversationalists I have met that I find it difficult to state, even broadly, the rules, compliance with which, may be said to be indicated in their conversation. I have already stated that every effort should be made in conversation never to monopolize the talk to oneself. I should like to add that it is not proper to conduct conversation in a manner that may give the impression that you are condescending to talk to someone who represents but a low level of life. The human mind is so constituted that it does not wish to be patronized. Whatever be your intellectual attainment or whatever be the reach of your powers of persuasion, you will never be able to impress in a conversation unless your whole manner of appearance and speech is calculated to reflect your humanity, your culture, your magnanimity and above all, your humility. Never directly contradict anything that the other may have to say. By all means have the courage to stress your view-point but never try to do this dogmatically and with an air of infallibility. In the first place, it is possible that you may not be taking a correct view of the question under discussion and in the second place, you *can* be effective without being directly offensive, and in fact the more so, if you are least presumptuous. It is always wise never to offer an adverse comment on the

personality of the man you are conversing with: you must never offer a scathing, sarcastic or an impolite remark merely for the fun of it. You can be humorous without being in the least offensive and remember, it is the very function of humour that it should make other people cheerful and happy and this can best be achieved by being kindly and compassionate. The best humour is that which the while it makes you laugh also draws a tear out of your eye. So conduct yourself when you are engaged in conversing with others that a distinct impression is created of your desire to learn and this can best be achieved by taking interest in all that the other man has to say. You should make it appear that you are taking in everything he is saying and in fact, you are profoundly interested in all that he is saying. Above all, avoid self-praise. Do not indulge in the practice of recouting events and incidents from your life which are calculated to depict your personality as though you were the paragon of virtue or the very cream of creation. Nor again must you encourage anyone to indulge in sycophancy or in even genuine praise of what you may have achieved or what you stand for. The best course in such a situation always is to change the topic without telling the person with whom you are conversing that you do not encourage other people to praise you. He will get the hint and will not persist any further and will carry in his being a very high opinion about you.

The last advice that I can give in this regard is that you must learn to react with earnestness to the jest and lightheartedness with which the person you are conversing with is reacting to your utterances; and in case this one himself is in earnest, you would find it worthwhile to redeem the seriousness of the situation by reacting to his utterances with a light-touch. Thus it is that you would make it appear that the fountain-source of human goodwill and understanding lies midway between earnestness and frivolity and that it is between these two extremes that the human relationship must be made to find its fulcrum.

1952:

Woe on the praying ones
Who are unmindful of their prayers.

AL-QURAN 107, (4 and 5)

* * *

I pray God, the Omnipotent, to place us in the ranks of his chosen, among the number of those whom He directs to the path of safety; in whom He inspires fervour lest they forget Him; whom He cleanses from all defilement, that nothing may remain in them except Himself; yea, of those whom He indwells completely, that they may adore none besides Him.

AL-GHAZZALI.

* * *

Now prayer, in its general notion, may be defined to be an elevation of the mind to God, or more largely and expressly thus: prayer is an actuation of an intellective soul towards God, expressing, or at least implying, an entire dependence on Him as the author and fountain of all good, a will and readiness to give Him his due, which is no less than all love, all obedience, adoration, glory and worship, by humbling and annihilating the self and all creatures in his presence; and lastly, a desire and intention to aspire to an union of spirit with Him.

Hence it appears that prayer is the most perfect and most divine action that a rational soul is capable of. It is of all actions and duties the most indispensably necessary.

AUGUSTINE BAKER.

VALUE OF MEDITATION AND PRAYER

I

In these tumultous times to talk about meditation, or to offer an appreciation of the significance and value of prayer looks rather out of place; the spirit of our age and the moral mood of contemporary Humanity (or Animality?) are not favourable for discussions such as these. We are, thanks to our progress, more proud of our battle-ships, our gun-powder and our machine-guns, than we are of our poets, preachers and thinkers. We have not ceased hugging those idols that have in them the *virtue* of destroying life in all its forms. And gone are those days when we could afford to talk of life-promoting activities. Today, whatever tends to produce chaos in this God's world, we are eager to applaud with a passionate zeal, and whatever tends to lend grace and dignity to "our task here below" we dub as 'dull', 'monotonous' and 'uninspiring'.

All the same, there is a sense in which it is true to say that this discussion is not so very out of tune with our times as it would seem to the naive critic ; for, it is in times such as the one we are living through, that due to the operation of the Law of polarity, by their very opposition to current ideas, subjects like meditation and prayer evoke considerable interest and excitement from the thinking section of our society. And so, for precisely the same reason, it was not without some justification that even a worldly wise country like England, when it was threatened by the onslaught of Hitler and his hordes, had to declare one day as "Prayer Day"; and we have been told by those who are entrusted with the task of chronicling contemporary events, that throughout the length and breadth of the British Empire prayers were said and

offerings were made for the purpose, it would seem, of appeasing the wrath of providence. Why go further? Due to the scarcity of water, when in the year 1940 famine had threatened the economic stability of Lower Sind, the Government of our Province, all of a sudden became religious minded, and declared one day as Prayer Day for the public. Far be it for me to characterise this attitude of mind as sacreligious, or even heretical; all I contend is that during times of political or of economic upheaval, even politicians are likely to become somewhat "Prayer-Minded", and in a strange way, outragiously religious in their out-look . . .

Prayer, as I conceive it, is 'a mere giving' and a spontaneous out-pouring of the spirit; it is the highest expression we know, of man's *recognition* that, after all, he is an insignificant and fragile force in this stupendous universe; and that, in him as well as outside him, there is a power that rules, in a royal manner, all the vast variety of objects and individuals one sees in the world. Prayer thus is an end-in-itself. It follows that if you direct your prayers with the sole object of obtaining relief from a difficulty which you have brought on yourself due to your ignorance and want of faith, you have prayed in vain, and debased it to defeat its own purpose.

The field that has brought forth green corn is grateful to the benevolent rays of the sun that have kissed its breast, for she needs the heat of the sun before her tender plants could ripen and yield grain. So also, the sour mango must expose itself to the heat of the summer sun before it can ripen into a sweet and delicious fruit. And thus must the soul of man continually and consciously bathe itself in the sunshine of the spirit, and meditate on its unique and matchless expression in this world of creation; it can then become ripe, and worthy of a higher destiny. Biological growth is fostered by vital elements which the organism assimilates; psychological development comes into full swing when the individual shares in the intellectual content

of great thoughts, and is influenced by the company of refined men. The infant spirit in man must also suck profusely at the motherly bosom of the infinite; for after all, just as life thrives on life, the spirit also lives on spirit. This "living on spirit" is, in fact, what the sages mean by prayer.

2

Living as we do, in this "muddy vesture of decay" and in a world which is only too full of corrupting influences and irresistable temptations, we do stand in need of something which may keep us clean and serve to purify our being. Inertia is the attribute of all existence: we are not able to resist this line of least resistance because the tendency to become immobile is ingrained in our earthly self. How many times, for instance, have we not promised to ourselves that we will keep our apartment clean, and every morning remove the dust that accumulates on our study table and chair; but all the same, days pass away, and our study goes on accumulating all the dirt and dust, and we come to accept it for what it is worth. It is then very difficult to take the first step of sweeping the floor or even cleaning the furniture that is lying there. So also we may promise ourselves every night we go to bed to wake up early in morning the next day, but when that moment comes, we find ourselves unable to fulfil the promise so solemnly given to our own selves. Inertia, laziness and sloth assert themselves in the face of all our robust resolutions, and the consequence is, we are, every now and again, thwarted by our weaknesses and infirmities. So also, we are likely to uncritically accept our status and position in life and come to regard ourselves as though there were, for us, no possibility of progress. A piece of iron, if it is to lie in the water and not allowed to be rusted, must be taken out repeatedly and *oiled:* in the absence of this oiling process it is bound to get rusted. So also with man. He is likely to interfere with his growth, spoil his heritage, and degrade his personal life to the level of beasts if he is not

kept above the corrupting taint of wordly intrigue. He must endeavour to avoid his involvement in all ignoble undertakings. He must always be on his guard. Eternal vigilance is demanded of those who mean to preserve untarnished their moral manhood and not fritter away the opportunity that earthly life provides for growing in spiritual stature.

It is a fact, and must be accepted in all humility as the very attribute of all wordly association that, when you keep one bad apple with 99 good apples, the 99 good apples do not convert one bad apple into a good one: it is the one bad apple that contaminates and spoils the remaining 99 apples. So also, you may live quite a refined sort of life for twenty-three hours of the day, but if in the twenty-fourth hour the evil gains the upper hand, it is not that you have lost that hour but that your whole day, nay, your whole life has met with a dreadful end. Every moment of a man's life counts in the scheme of things, just even as, on the appropriateness of a single note, the melody or harmony of a musical composition is based. That is why every moment of his life, man must guard against the possibility of error and remain wide awake to see that he does not lose sight of the goal which he has kept in view. Prayer reminds man of these serious pursuits, and through meditation he is enabled to keep steadily some master passion of higher ethical life before himself. In the absence of these aids to living a wise and noble life, we are likely to lose our balance, run amuck and so come to be regarded as reckless individuals who are controlled, not by a well conceived ideal, but by the humour of the moment.

The Quran assigns to 'prayer' a new meaning altogether. Prayer, it says, keeps one away from indecency and evil. Man is commanded to read that which is written, that is to say, to become aware of what he is destined for. The world of creation follows the Law which has been "inscribed even before the time began". 'Did not,' asks the Quran, 'pass over man a period of time

when he was not anything worth mentioning.' Man has been created out of a sperm and he is to be tried and on that account he has been endowed with the powers of hearing, seeing and thinking. He must establish prayer because that is the only way whereby he can become aware of what the Divine Decrees about him are and what is going to be the test to which he is to be put. Not only will prayer enable him to guard against indecency and evil but according to the Quran there is no higher activity for man than the remembrance of Him who has prescribed that higher Destiny of which he must endeavour to become aware. In the context of these ideas we would be in a position to appreciate the significance of the following lines of the Holy Book.

"Read that which has been revealed to you of that which is written and establish prayer: surely prayer keeps one away from indecency and evil and certainly the remembrance of God is the greatest (or highest activity) and God is aware of what you do." (Al-Quran, Chap. XXIX,v.45.)

Prayer is thus a means for the moral elevation of man and is therefore the highest activity in which he must constantly engage himself. But prayer must not be allowed to degenerate into a ritual or a mere formal conformity with a code of behaviour prescribed by a particular religion. Such prayer is clearly condemned by the Quran which says, "Woe on those praying ones who are unmindful of their prayers."

3

Add to this the fact that through meditation and prayer Man accelerates the process of his personal evolution and realizes the significance and value of life more quickly. Whatever tends to strengthen and transmute the forces of life, somehow or the other, necessarily involves moral and spiritual progress. All meditation consists in controlling consciousness in such a way as to retain it in a motionless position: it is immaterial, says Keyserling, whether, for

this purpose, an external object, an idea, or nothing, is focused. The important thing is to gather up the diffused forces of life into one single power. And undoubtedly the power of concentration, of meditation and prayer is the real propelling power of our psychic mechanism. "Nothing heightens our capacity for performance as much as its increase; every success, no matter in what domain it be, can be traced back to the intelligent exploitation of this power."

Often a question is asked as to what is the purpose of life. A vast variety of answers is given; some say the meaning of life is in service, in the surrender of the self, in self-sacrifice, in the sacrifice of every thing, even life itself; others declare that the meaning of life is in the delight of it, reliev-ed against the "expectation of the final horror of death". Some say that the meaning of life is in perfection, and in the creation of a better future beyond the grave, or in future lives for ourselves. Some say that the meaning of life is in the approach to non-existence; still others, that the meaning of life lies in the perfection of the race, in the organisation of life on earth; while there are others who deny even the possibility of knowing its meaning. The fault of all these explanations consists in the fact that they all attempt to discover the meaning of life outside of itself. But if, instead of thus speculating about it, men were simply to look within themselves, and meditate, they would see that, in reality, the meaning of life is not after all to be traced to something that is outside it. The end of life is 'more life'; it consists in the enrichment and expansion of Man's consciousness which in its turn is the highest expression of "life" that we know of. Human consciousness, in its present phase atleast is not such as its culture could be neglected by man without dwarfing his personality. Was it not Shakespeare who had once upon a time said, "Ripeness is all?" Did not Keats regard this world as a "Valley of Soul-making?"

The individual must therefore take up the question of

personal perfection in his own hands. By the progressive enlargement and culture of his powers of concentration a man can master life's forces and exploit them for the fulfilment of some higher purpose. Also he can learn to silence the involuntary psychic activity. We have, after all, but a small quantity of energy at our disposal, and the less we spend uselessly, the more remains for intelligent application. Every man is more or less like that blind scorpion, who keeps up stinging every thing it comes across, with the result that its sting is not so effective as that of a snake who first of all discerns who his enemy is, and then he attacks. And regarded from the view-point of the content of his consicousness, it is the duty of the Man who wants to be worthy of his Destiny, to expand it by assimilating everything that he perceives; and regarded from the view-point of its unification, he must integrate all the diverse elements of his discursive observation and introspection into one significant whole. To the extent to which he endeavours to do so he approximates correctly to his ideal. And nothing helps this process more than meditation and prayer.

In fact, the more we meditate the more we liberate ourselves from the habit of thinking along the channels of the accustomed categories, and each time we do so some new and unique property in the outer as well as in the inner world begins to reveal its significance and charm to us. Thus we pass from condition to condition, from one level of life to another; and the deeper we descend in ourselves, the more do we discover what a wealth of thought lies buried under the cover of our every-day mode of regarding things. The more our ego is anchored in the spirit the more chance it has of enlarging its content and unifying its powers.

And through prayer lies the path of devotion that leads us to the life of the spirit. The usual distinction drawn between the way of the heart and the way of the head, between the deliverance of emotion and that of the intellect, is absolutely unjustifiable, and has been the source of so much

confusion in our thinking. There is no psychological state which is entirely and exclusively emotional or intellectual. Nor can it ever be validly said that "in the conflict between the emotion and intellect" one triumphed over the other. This mode of thinking is vicious and betrays ignorance of the psychology of human emotions. It is only one emotion that can triumph over another emotion. An emotion, as an experienced state of the being, is a driving power which realizes some idea; in fact, the idea and emotion are not really two, but one. Theoretically all emotions are an aid to knowledge: all emotions arise because of the desire to know some one or the other thing. Let us consider for the sake of argument, the emotion of Love. The man who has never experienced the emotion of Love will not understand many things in life and nature. He will never understand, say, the relation of a mother to her child; nor, how, for instance, the offspring excites feeling of love in the heart of the mother. And through this feeling a mother or lover knows what to protect, safeguard and nourish. Of course, all emotional knowledge is, strictly speaking, personal knowledge. But the personal element can be detached; in fact it is this liberation from the personal element which augments the cognising power of the emotions. The more the personal elements preponderate in emotional life the greater is the possibility of delusion. But to the extent to which an emotion consciously realizes an idea it is illuminated. Thus it cannot be said that prayer is entirely emotional; on the contrary, the prayer of a liberated spirit partakes of the nature of a serene contemplation which is neither intellectual nor emotional but a unique fusion of the two.

4

This brings me to the cardinal point in the present discussion which I want to emphasise. All culture of concentration, all contemplation, say of an astronomical problem, or, the properties of non-Euclidean space, and in short, every

movement of thought that enables the ego to move withinwards, is prayer, *provided it is consciuosly experienced as a part of that task for which we are stationed here below.* A mere *formal* bowing before an invisible power cannot be characterised as an act of prayer; all living faith must find its expression in actual feeling of reverence before all that is good and great in the world. So that, when a student of Astronomy gazes into the limitless expanse of space and is filled with the feelings of admiration and wonder, he is as much entering into the life of the spirit as may do the devotees who meditate upon some line from a holy book or an aphorism uttered bytheir spiritual preceptors.

The truth of the foregoing observations is fully established if we could correctly discern the precise nature of belief. Belief is an integral part of our mental make-up and we cannot conceive of a mind that does not "believe" in something. *What* one believes, one instinctively begins to act upon and realize in outward behaviour. Belief is an incident of finite consciousness. A mind that had everything present 'before' *it*, would have no need to believe in anything. Besides a "theory" is not "belief". We may believe in a theory, and have, what is known as a theory of belief. A theory may ripen into belief, if a certain type of attitude is adopted by a mind with respect to it. Belief is always practical in the sense that what we believe we reflect by conducting ourselves in accordance therewith. A theory on the other hand is a mere rationale of a given phenomenon and is a pure academic attitude of the human mind. Now a man may believe in something and yet he may not take it to be theoretically true. A story related to us by a German Professor of Astronomy explains this difference between theory and belief clearly. A certain Hindu student, who was studying Astronomy under this Professor, predicted, unassisted by any aid from the Professor, that on a certain date, at a certain time of the night, eclipse of the moon would take place. When at precisely the predicted time the

eclipse did take place the student ran to his study room to strike the hammer on the drum that had already been kept by him for the purpose—"just to frighten the Evil spirits away." Now, theoretically, at least he knew that there were no such things as evil spirits who were responsible for the lunar eclipse, yet, all the same, he did actually believe the other way about.

All belief, psychologically considered, proceeds as it were, from the depth of our being. If a man, through the process of contemplation and prayer, intensifies the emotional tone of symbols with which that belief is either naturally or artificially associated, the consequence is that the deepest layers of man's consciousness are touched, stirred and set into motion. All the psychic potential energy is released into one stupendous thrill of emotion which rising to the surface transforms the consciousness and eventually ripens the being of man and enables him to complete, thanks to the vitality and creative power of the conscious and widely awake self, that very process which leads to the expansion and enrichment of life. This is how, for instance, a regular and well sustained effort to chant words mechanically like '*om*' or *Rama* has led many an unsophisticated Sadhus to a higher level of life. That also explains why a devoted, and uncritical acceptance or an incessant recital of meaningless *mantras* or other similar juxtapositions of words has been responsible for awakening the slumbering souls of men. The problem only is to stir one's unfathomable deeps into one unified and harmonious motion—it is immaterial how you succeed in doing so. And not a few, says Keyserling, have been enabled to accomplish all this through even a stroke of indigestion, because with some at least, for experiences such as these, metaphysical insight is not always necessary.

But with those in whom the spirit of criticism is awake and with whom no belief is proper until and unless it has behind it the theoretical explanation which seeks to justify it, the problem is not the same as it is with simple and unsophisticated souls. The modern educated man will not

advance himself by relapsing into the primitive modes of approaching the ideal. He must march forward in the way of knowledge. He must think, meditate, criticise, and weigh his thoughts in a logical balance, before even the formation of a belief can at all take place : therefore, not the non-rational forces of primitive 'belief' but the forces of a well articulated intellectual life can help us on our way. We must renounce, in the language of the Hindu thought, *Bhakti Yoga* for *Giana Yoga*: the former path is out of date for the modern man whose centre of consciousness lies not in the blind acceptance of any code of life but in understanding. Our prayer and meditation have been fused; we must think, and think—perchance the shell of empirical categories may burst and metaphysical insight may lead us nearer to the source of life. Not intuition but intellect is becoming the instrument of our spiritual perception, and what helps our evolution at present is not blind belief in, and devotion to, an unintelligent 'code of life' but in a clearer perception, through reason, of our real status and Destiny. Rationality and Rationality alone is the determinant factor—and prayer and meditation in the sense stressed by me therefore are the only ways to salvation today.

5

There is yet one more consideration which ought to be urged in order to emphasise the importance of the role that meditation and prayer play in the development of human personality. The concept of human personality, as we all know, has acquired a new meaning as a result of the recent investigations that have been carried on in the the field of psychology. There are, according to Jung, at least three important mental levels at which human personality reflects itself: (1) consciousness; (2) the personal unconscious and (3) the collective unconscious. Consciousness of the sort we are directly aware of, is by itself, not a very important determinant of our personality and in fact it reflects it only casually and incidentally. Our

'self-consciousness' cannot last for any appreciable duration: we cannot be self-conscious for more than three minutes at a stretch. Any attempt to prolong it beyond this span brings about a feeling of mental and physical fatigue. Our present state of consciousness, understood from the plane of a higher consciousness, is but a state of sleep, and in fact most of what we do in the state of our present consciousness is really a mechanical sort of behaviour. The "*I*", as a centre of conscious personality, represents but a slender something and is not, from the metaphysical point of view, of much significance. So far as the personal unconscious is concerned, it represents a store-house of the experiences which have been forgotten, or which have been directly repressed by our conscious personality as being repugnant or prejudicial to its proper functioning. It is from this store-house of our mind that we recall experiences which lie lower down and make them rise up to the surface and enable them to occupy a focal point in the field of our present level of consciousness. So far as the collective unconscious is concerned, it denotes that extremely deep layer of our personality which clings to our life, being a legacy which has been bequeathed to us by a long line of our ancestors. It is that deepest layer of our personality which we share with all our fellowmen, and its existence must be assumed in order to account for some remarkable patterns of behaviour which come into playful activity in the life of mankind under the stress of some well defined circumstances.

Each layer of psychic organism acts and reacts on the other. Our individual consciousness is but the apex, that uppermost section of a pyramid of psychic life which, in its turn, if properly exploited, serves to illuminate those innermost depths of our personality which form the common denominator of the life of entire mankind. It is from this common reservoir of collective unconscious that the great minds draw nourishment, from where come the incentives to heroic action, inspiration and enlightenment. We are told, for instance, that Newton and Leibnitz discovered the

calculus at about the same time; so also we are told Darwin, Herbert Spencer and Lamarck discovered and applied the law of biological evolution almost contemporaneously. Contemporary psychologists like Freud, Adler, and Jung have carried on investigations in the fields of psycho-analysis, individual and analytic psychology, to understand this phenomenon. They have explored the nature and content of the 'sub-conscious' and have drawn important inferences therefrom every effort has been made to understand the secret of human personality and the modes in which it expresses itself. The explanation of the phenomenon of simultaneous discoveries made by different individuals working in different places and circumstances, according to these psychologists, lies in the fact that each one of us is ultimately rooted in one and the same basic psychic soil. All new ideas may be regarded as being the tides caused by time on the ocean of the collective unconscious of mankind. The upthrust of the ideas in the field of our individual consciousness may, with advantage, be alikened to the darting of fishes from the surface of the sea: only he who is lying-in-wait will be able to notice them. A great thinker succeeds in capturing these new ideas and expressing them in the vernacular of his age only because he is in communion with the deepest layers of his personality and keeps himself in a state of perpetual watchfulness. His vocation is to be alert, eternally vigilant. By stirring the deeps of his Being he is able to bring to the surface those ideas which, in their turn, assist him to descend deep down to the very foundations of his personality. This process is accelerated by our capacity for meditation: the greater the power of concentration, greater becomes our power of perception. A man who develops these powers of his personality becomes the voice of the spirit of the age. He becomes possessed by true ideas and comes to be used as an instrument by the Higher Powers for the communication of higher truth. All originality, creativity and inventiveness are no doubt the gifts of the Higher Powers; but, only he

will be the recipient of these graces who is, through the process of meditation and prayer, continually in contact with the "collective unconscious" of mankind.

This hypothesis of collective unconscious follows closely the findings of Jung: it must, however, in fairness to this great psychologist of our time, be mentioned that he does not himself claim that he knows much about it. He himself says, "Thus the unconscious seems to be a great 'X' concerning which the only thing indisputably known is that important effects proceed from it." At another place he says:—

"The Freudian psycho-analysis consists in a technique that permits us to bring back to consciousness so-called repressed contents that have become unconscious. This technique is a therapeutic method designed to treat and cure neuroses. In the light of this method it seems as if the neuroses came into existence in order that painful memories and tendencies—so-called incompatible contents—should be repressed from consciousness, and made unconscious by a sort of moral resentment arising from educational influences. So regarded, the unconscious psychic activity, the so-called unconscious, appears chiefly as a receptacle of all those contents that are antipathetic to consciousness, as well as all forgotten impressions. But on the other hand one cannot exclude the view that these incompatible contents themselves came from unconscious instincts; that is to say, the unconscious is not just a receptacle, but is the very mother of the things the conscious would be rid of. We can go a step further, and say the unconscious creates new contents. All that the human spirit has ever created has come from contents which, in the last analysis, existed once as unconscious seeds."

The difficulty with most of us is precisely this that we do not allow our consciousness to establish proper contact with this Collective Unconscious and thus act as a safety-valve for letting out those contents which are persistently clamouring to find manifestation in the world of Time.

We are ourselves living too much on the surface of our personality and we do not give any thought to the problem of integrating our personality and allowing our consciousness to obtain a complete mastery of that total range of psychic contents—contents which lie stored up both in our personal as well as in the collective unconscious.

1940

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Jala Sakti hai shama-kushta ko moj-i-nafs unkey
Illahi ! kya chhupa hota hai ahl-i-dil kay seenoon men

A wave from their breath can set alight the extinguished candle O' God ! what lies hidden in the bosom of the "People of the Heart".

IQBAL.

* * * *

Sifa-e-Barq Chamakta hai mera Faqr-e-buland
Ke bhataktay na Phrain Zulmate Shab main rahi

Like the lighting shines my lofty thought
Lest, the travellers lose their way and wander in the darkness of the night.

IQBAL.

* * * *

Here on Earth we are Soldiers, fighting in a foreign land; that understand not the plan of the campaign, and have no need to understand it; seeing well what is at our hand to be done. Let us do it like Soldiers; with submission, with courage, with a heroic joy. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might'. Behind us, behind each one of us, lie Six Thousand Years of human effort, human conquest: before us is the boundless Time, with its, as yet, uncreated and unconquered Continents and Eldorados, which we, even we, have to conquer, to create; and from the bosom of Eternity there shine for us, celestial guiding stars.

'My inheritance, how wide and fair!
Time is my fair seed-field, of Time I'm heir'.

CARLYLE.

A TRAVELLER'S TRIBUTE TO LAHORE*

I have been here in Lahore now for quite some time and I think I ought to be able to express what I feel about it. I realise that I have been here for a very short time indeed and during that short time I have been mainly occupied with professional work and have not had much time to study for myself all those problems which, in my opinion, ought to be taken into account before the civic, social and political life of this place can be appreciated. But the fact that my contact with Lahore has not been for any appreciable period cannot, I think, adversely affect the validity of my verdict on it. This is so because, if you know a person or a place at all, you know it in the first few moments of your contact; and it is only thus that you can at all see it as directly and know it as intimately, as does a mother her own child. Here, as elsewhere, first impression is the most decisive and the first glimpse brings to you the most telling revelation.

Analytic approach to the problem of understanding an object or of reaching a conclusion may be apt where one is engaged in discovering, what might be termed "objective truth," as distinguished from merely being able to evaluate it. Where, however, the primary question is of perceiving the spiritual significance of a given phenomenon or of assessing the psychic potential of a personality, or of contemplating the cultural possibilities that lie dormant in the soul of a people, you have to throw aside the conceptional mode of dealing with the situation and rely mainly on that inward sense of sympathetic understanding without which it is not possible to get at the root of the matter. In fine, in such cases one must learn to await the advent of

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* Lahore is the Capital of the Province of the Punjab (Pakistan).

that "serene and blessed mood", of which Wordsworth speaks:—

"That blessed mood,
In which the burden of the mystery
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Is lightened: that serene and blessed mood
In which the affections gently lead us on
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and becomes a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
We see into the life of things."

It was precisely for that very reason that when I was in Cairo, and wanted to see the Pyramids, I had decided to be with them, as it were in their company, at night rather than during the day. If I had desired to see the Pyramids in the mere visual sense, I could have been contented with looking up the numerous photographs of them; but it was precisely because I was eager to discover something which no photographer's art can fix and no discursive statement describe that I decided to go to them at a time when my senses might least interfere with the truth of my perception. I wanted to live with the Pyramids, to penetrate deep into that inner significance which seems to animate them, and I wanted to disentangle that precious secret which lies locked-up in the breast of the Sphinx.

All our senses are designed to act as mere gateways through which a communion may be established between our inner life and that outer condition which we are out to study and appreciate; but alas! often enough, the senses come to obstruct this communion, distort the data, and thus eliminate the very possibility of our enjoyment of Nature. Instead of our senses serving as transparent media for the impression of the outer world to reach our being, they, not infrequently, become smoke-screens and interfere with our enjoyment of the beauty of creation. Our sensibility is as much to be educated as our powers of thinking: in fact, no

thought-life is possible unless you have disciplined your senses first...It is, then, precisely as a man who has *felt* things rather than as a man who *knows* them that I propose to let my mind ruminate upon the rich harvest of those innumerable emotional experiences which it has fallen to my lot to live through whilst I was sojourning at Lahore.

There is something wonderfully psychic about Lahore which it is so hard to describe. Karachi and Lahore belong to two different worlds: Karachi presents no individuality, no colour, no enthusiasm: its population is amorphous, lacking, not only in homogeneity but also in what may be regarded as qualities that make for social cohesion. Whenever I contemplate the main characteristics of the population of Karachi I find it more or less resembling a spectacle that is familiar to us when we visit a busy railway platform where the train has just arrived; in both cases, each individual just happens to be there although he has a different destination. Lahore, on the other hand, presents itself as a unified whole; its population seems to be moving towards some common goal and appears to be engaged in some common endeavour. Lahore has a personality which exists over and above all, that can be discerned with the mere senses. Karachi, on the other hand is dull and mechanical and like any other large commercial town, it presents you with nothing but a sort of colourless cosmopolitanism. Lahore, in the way in which I have looked at it, seems to have some sort of a tangible "tradition" hovering over its head: everything that you see here has a historical dimension of a kind which is not discernible if you were to see the same thing elsewhere. To live in Lahore is to live historically: here one finds onseself inevitably rooted in the past and intently gazing on to the future. In this sense, life in Lahore is richer and basically more human: it is definitly more substantial and weighty than it is in Karachi.

The historical perspective which the streets of Lahore present to you has not the least smell of a library about it:

it has nothing to do with those facts associated with mere knowledge of the type that could be acquired from the books of history; it is much more sparkling and vital than anything that you can think of.

It is undoubtedly true that in the making of Indian History, Lahore has played an important role. Here lie the earthly remains of Jehangir and his beloved Queen, and there stand those mausoleums, monuments and shrines that consecrate some of the dearest things that we know of our history. But it is not with reference to all this that I feel myself living historically. Here, my consciousness seems to mirror the whole movement of history: it is not merely the question of seeing the historical facts but of being able to participate in their actual movement that seems to me to be the decisive point in the experience which I am attempting to portray. . .

Lahore is wonderfully green. Its tall, graceful trees soar up to unexpected heights; they seem to greet you wherever you go. Its spacious lawns and beautiful creepers seem to welcome you wherever you turn. Here, I have lived in intimate communion with Nature. How many times have I not wandered aimlessly in the twilight hours through the Bagh-i-Jinnah and felt as though I were a traveller from another world?

Over and above the majesty of this earthly splendour that is presented to you in this world of fragrent smells and wonderful colours, you have the all-clear sky ever so full with the brightest of stars. The sunrise and the sunset hours often conspire with the dusky horizon that crimsons the dawn and twilight of Lahore in creating a heavenly spectacle, the like of which I have not seen anywhere before.

Of course, in this context, I must not be taken to be merely referring to the well-planned beautiful colonies that are springing up in Lahore. I am thinking of the green surroundings in which Lahore seems to be enveloped and preserved for the eternal delight of those who have the good fortune to visit it. . .

I not unmindful of the fact that I come from Sind, a province which, despite the great gift of the Indus to it, is after all, as compared to the fertile plains of the Punjab, but a desert. An early childhood lived in such parts is apt to make a man sensitive to the world of beautiful colours that you find inwrought and inwoven in the rich texture of verdure one sees spread out here. Thus the impression that the greenery of Lahore has made upon me may, in part, be attributed to the fact that this grandeur and sublimity which is denoted by an endless array of tall and graceful trees is a sight rarely to be met with in Sind. But although this may partially explain why I have been impressed by the greenery of Lahore, it cannot be a complete explanation of that experience.

I am painfully aware of the fact that all these great gifts of nature that have been so very extravagantly lavished on Lahore could be considerably improved if only the men who live within its fold and are responsible for the management of its affairs, could be persuaded to put in a real effort to make this beautiful city still more beautiful. It is up to the citizens of Lahore and the Punjab Government to realise what an earthly paradise Lahore can be if they would only set about 'putting their house in order' and help nature to assert itself and come out in all her glory and greatness. . .

The climate of Lahore is bracing, exhilarating and wonderfully invigorating. About the Karachi climate the less said the better: it kills you by slow and imperceptible degrees and is thoroughly depressing. That is why for mental workers, at any rate, Karachi is no place to live in. I am aware that extreme temperatures are reached in Lahore both in summer and in winter. But in the assessment of climate let us not constitute thermometer as the deciding authority. There is more of frankness and candour about Lahore weather, and therefore, one is sure of being able to deal with it on its own terms. This is so because the "forewarned is forearmed". The trouble

with the Karachi climate on the other hand, consists precisely in this that you do not know what the next minute will be like. You have practically all the four seasons of the year sometimes compressed in every twenty-four hours of the night and day cycle. The helpless human body finds it difficult to adjust itself to this everchanging external concourse of thermal conditions, and the only asylum whither it must repair, if it is to survive at all, is either the hospital or the nursing home. . .

I have met important people here in Lahore, people who are said to adorn its social and political life. They are gentle people, remarkably hospitable and, above all, very kind and affectionate. But their affectionate nature is not their own. It appears to have been induced in them by the remarkably sympathetic natural environment in which they spend the days of their life. It is like a piece of iron behaving as a magnet in the vicinity of a magnet.

I do not know why it has been said and believed, that the Punjabis are stubborn, self-willed and domineering. How false that judgment is can be realised if you live with them in Lahore. Seen against the background which is Lahore, they appear upright, honest and above all industrious people. I have often maintained that they constitute the most decisive element in population of Western Pakistan. If they are supposed to have any angularities and eccentricities, it is essentially because they have not been understood and their viewpoint never appreciated or recognised as a valid view-point at all.

It is not for nothing that the greatest poet of our time, Allama Iqbal, came to live in this lovely town and by his presence in it, made it a place of pilgrimage during his lifetime for hundreds and thousands of his ardent admirers. He was the first man who, as far back as 1930, put forward the idea of Pakistan, and it is for that reason that many have found in his poetry a manifesto of the historical mission of Islam in the modern world. In his address before the annual session of the All-India Muslim League, held

at Allahabad in 1930, he apologised to the audience for indulging in, what he thought might be considered as, "an academic discussion," but proceeded to defend his approach to the political problem of the day in words that have become immortal. "To address this session of the All-India Muslim League," he said, "you have selected a man who has not despaired of Islam as a living force for freeing the outlook of man from its geographical limitations, who believes that religion is a power of the utmost importance in the life of individuals as well as states, and finally who believes that *Islam is itself Destiny and will not suffer a destiny*! Such a man cannot but look at matters from his own point of view. Do not think that the problem I am indicating is purely a theoretical one. It is a very living and practical problem calculated to affect the very fabric of Islam as a system of life and conduct. On a proper solution of it alone depends your future as a distinct cultural unit in India. Never in our history Islam has had to stand a greater trial than the one which confronts it to-day. It is open to a people to modify, reinterpret or reject the foundational principles of their social structure; but it is absolutely necessary for them to see clearly what they are doing before they undertake to try a fresh experiment. Nor should the way in which I am approaching this important problem lead anybody to think that I intend to quarrel with those who happen to think differently. You are a Muslim assembly and, I suppose, anxious to remain true to the spirit and ideals of Islam. My sole desire, therefore, is to tell you frankly what I honestly believe to be the truth about the present situation. In this way alone it is possible for me to illuminate, according to my light, the avenues of your political action."

The whole of that address is full of wise words indeed and anyone reading it is bound to be struck by the remarkable power of pre-vision with which this sage of Islam was endowed. The solution of the political problem urged by him, again to state it in his words, was, "I would like to

see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single state. Self-government within the British Empire or without the British Empire and the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims at least of North-West area." The concluding remarks contained in that address of his are as true to-day as they were when he first uttered them. How, I often wish, the Mussalmans of Pakistan would turn to those precious words of his in a spirit of humility and acquire from them light, guidance and inspiration. In order that they may see clearly before them what their duty demands of them they must read, chew, nay, digest, those immortal words. He starts by asking his audience the question, "Is it possible for you to achieve the organic wholeness of a united will?" and proceeds to answer, "Yes it is"; then follow those words which it is difficult to improve upon:—

"Rise above sectional interests and private ambitions, and learn to determine the value of your individual and collective action, however directed on material ends, in the light of the ideal which you are supposed to represent. Pass from matter to spirit. Matter is diversity; spirit is light, life and unity. One lesson I have learnt from the history of Muslims. At critical moments in their history it is Islam that has saved Muslims and not *vice versa*. If to-day you focus your vision on Islam and seek inspiration from the ever-vitalising idea embodied in it, you will be only reassembling your scattered forces, regaining your lost integrity, and thereby saving yourself from total destruction. One of the profoundest verses in the Holy Quran teaches us that the birth and rebirth of the whole of humanity is like the birth and rebirth of a single individual. Why cannot you who, as a people, can well claim to be the first practical exponents of this superb conception of humanity, live and move and have your being as a single individual? I do not wish to mystify anybody when I say that things in India are not what they appear to be. The meaning of

this, however, will dawn upon you only when you have achieved a real collective ego to look at them. In the words of the Quran, "Hold fast to yourself, no one who erreth can hurt you, provided you are well-guided." (Al-Quoran, 5:104).

Iqbal is like a light-house that sheds its light on the dark seas—light with the help of which the ships that have lost their way may be in a position to define their course. He is that high priest of humanity whose voice will continually be heard for the enlightenment and guidance of the multitude so long as the Urdu and Persian Languages live. In his poetry many have found comfort and hope. I regard him as the finest flower of the Muslim renaissance of the twentieth century. His appeal issues forth from the profoundest depth of his being: even where he is articulating an idea or a thought which is not original, he is able to convey it in a telling, effective and memorable manner; this is so because his appeal emanates from his own deep emotional attachment to the ideas he is propounding. This is the secret of his poetry as I understand it. . .

But it is not enough to admire; the higher virtue is to reflect all that he stood for and to provide for all the values that he stresses, a tangible expression in our lives. The greatest reverence that one could show to his poetry is to work out all those ideas that he has articulated: when that is done, a new chapter will have been commenced in our cultural history. Let us like soldiers, with courage, do our task—always remembering that the highest duty is, to do "whatever our hand findeth to do."

Lahore can thus become the cradle of Muslim spirit, spirit that is waiting to be born, now that a country like Pakistan has been carved-out to serve it as a body. If intellectual renaissance and enlightenment will see the dawn of a new day in this country, it will be on the sacred soil of Lahore. I often, contemplate those cultural possibilities that lie dormant in the hearts of hundreds and thousands of my countrymen: but I invariably come back, by a process of

inexorable logic, to the ugly present, to our apathy, to our slovenliness and to the utter demoralisation in which we find ourselves so helplessly caught.

For the last five or six years that Pakistan has come to be, we have not produced a single book worth the name, not created a single art movement or made a single contribution to the world of intellect or scientific knowledge. What is even worse—we are, day after day, becoming a terribly conceited people, a people who refuse to see truth and light, a people who are lost in petty squabbles and quarrels that do not matter. . .

Let me not, however, tarry any longer on these depressing thoughts. After all, I am here in a world of new Hope, not in a valley of despair.

Early in the mornings, while going to the Federal Court of Pakistan in Lahore, I used to see troops of children going to their schools. From all directions, an endless array of students would be seen thronging the portals of the schools. Here was a young generation on the march in search of light!

Each time I saw this sight I prayed to God that they, our children, be helped to acquire real knowledge and imbibe an enlightened outlook, a passion for living an honest and industrious life. After all, these, our children, have the burden of the future on them. Let us hope that they will carry aloft the banner of learning and light and will, when their day will have arrived, fulfil, as humble servants of God, His Purposes. . .

I have felt these things keenly only in Lahore and must I not offer to it and to its citizens my heartfelt gratitude for this realization?

*Hal jaza-ul-ehsan, illal ehsan?**

1952

* Is the reward of goodness aught save goodness. (Al-Quoran)

I sat down face to face with one couple. Between the man and the woman a child had hollowed himself out a place and fallen asleep. He turned in his slumber, and in the dim lamplight I saw his face. What an adorable face! A golden fruit had been born of these two peasants. Forth from this sluggish scum had sprung this miracle of delight and grace.

I bent over the smooth brow, over those mildly pouting lips, and I said to myself: This is a life full of beautiful promise. Little princes in legends are not different from this. Protected, sheltered, cultivated, what could not this child become?

When by mutation a new rose is born in a garden, all the gardeners rejoice. They isolate the rose, tend it, foster it. But there is no gardener for men. This little Mozart will be shaped like the rest by the common stamping machine. This little Mozart will love shoddy music in the stench of night dives. This little Mozart is condemned.

I went back to my sleeping car. I said to myself: Their fate causes these people no suffering. It is not an impulse to charity that has upset me like this. I am not weeping over an eternally open wound. Those who carry the wound do not feel it. It is the human race and not the individual that is wounded here, is outraged here. I do not believe in pity. What torments me to-night is the gardener's point of view. What torments me is not this poverty to which after all a man can accustom himself as easily as to sloth. Generations of Orientals live in filth and love it. What torments me is not the humps nor the hollows nor the ugliness. It is the slight, a little bit in all these men, of Mozart murdered.

Only the Spirit, if it breathe upon the clay, can create Man.

ANTOINE DE SAINT EXUPERY.

THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION

Spread all over Pakistan, we have a net-work of schools and colleges; institutions which the younger generation throng, day in and day out, in search of knowledge, and it is in these institutions that our students are *supposed to be busy* acquiring that moral and mental training which is to assist them not only in developing and organising those inner resources with which to appreciate and enjoy life but also to gain proficiency in the management of some art, craft, trade or profession so that they may be able to adjust themselves to the economic life of the Society. That the pursuit of these aims and objectives is laudable nobody can possibly dispute: the whole world to-day acknowledges the truth of the assertion that without proper education being imparted to the young it is not possible to found a really lasting and durable civilisation.

Although there is thus a general measure of agreement that education is the most vital activity and is essential to the maintenance of public order within the country and for the establishment of peace and goodwill between the several States that compose the international community, there is hardly any appreciable measure of agreement as to what *precisely* are the *objectives and aims* of education itself. What is more, even if it be possible to discover what the objectives and aims of education should be, there is hardly any agreed solution of the problem of settling the means, the methodology and technique for the consistent pursuit of those aims and objectives. Reflection serves to show that, unless we know what we are educating the younger generation for, we shall find that every effort on our part would, ultimately come to involve us in a futile expenditure of our national wealth, energy and goodwill.

It is also essential for the student who is being educated to know *why* he is being engaged in that adventure. It is undeniably true that not all students are quite aware of the purpose of their education and such of them as are conscious of the fact that there is a purpose for which they are being educated, are not clear in their mind as to what that purpose is. Education thus has become a meaningless activity: the whole educational process regarded both from the viewpoint of the teacher, as also from the viewpoint of the student, is thus of no significance whatsoever. Each can contribute to the success of the educational experiment only to the extent to which he becomes aware of its meaning and its purpose. It is because education has become a sort of dull and mechanical activity that it is not able to yield to us the results that a sound philosophy of education encourages us to expect from it.

A man once happened to pass by a place where some building activity was going on. Wishing to know what was going on, he began making enquiries from the workmen as to what they were doing. The first worker whom he met said, "I am cutting the stones," the second worker said: "I am earning my livelihood"; and the third worker said: "I am building a cathedral." Each one of them construed an identical physical activity in terms of a widely divergent perspective from which he regarded his activity. And in the answer that each one of them gave, was furnished evidence of the extent to which any of them had evolved. Likewise, if you were to interrogate the students or their teachers, as to the purpose of education, you are bound to get different answers from them; and from the answers you get, you might be able to discover for yourself the extent to which the ideal of education is being reflected by each one of its votaries. I can recall the case of one student who when asked by his teacher to say why he was sent to school, was frank enough to answer: "My parents send me here so that I may not trouble them at home."

Broadly speaking the aim of education should be to

facilitate the growth of human personality. But a statement of the purpose of education in term so wide as this cannot give any specific guidance as to the manner in which the education of the individual is to be regulated. Human personality is itself a very complex conception, and it is very difficult to expect a general agreement about its essential characteristics; and the practical question, "What is to be done in order that the proper development of human personality be brought about', cannot therefore be satisfactorily answered. But, to an extent to which it is possible, I would like to indicate, even be it so roughly, the perspective in which the functional utility of education may be seen and appreciated.

Human personality, in my opinion, could be looked at from two points of view: on the one hand, it might be regarded as an end in itself; on the other, as an element in a wider social synthesis. Regarded from the first point of view, it represents the very end of human evolution: in this sense it cannot be defined except in terms of the general purpose which cosmically considered is what human evolution itself is believed to be realizing. Human personality, in the second place, has a social aspect: it enters as an element in a wider synthesis. The instrumental value of human personality can thus be determined by considerations which have relevance to the immediate needs of society. In the ultimate analysis, a fully evolved human personality viewed as a consummated expression and fruition of life's possibilities is bound to redound to the credit of society, in the sense that, it is only such a mature and fully integrated personality that can make an effective and durable contribution to the fulfilment of social purposes. Similarly, a man who sets about making himself a useful member of society by responding to its immediate ends is bound, in the end, to discover that in the process of reflecting that ideal he has been able to enrich his personality and has been able to extend its reach much beyond its original scope.

The essential aspect of human education which needs stressing in the context of these ideas is that it is an attempt to use the means at the disposal of mankind for the control of the conditions of life; so that all obstacles to its progress are removed, and the free development of the human individual takes place speedily. Every kind of assistance, which is due to every child who has been born in society, has to be provided to him before he can become not only a serviceable member of that society but also be in a position to reflect in his own being, a wider cosmic purpose for the realization of which, according to the teachings of perennial philosophy and universal religion, he has been created.

Every child that is born in the world is a unique 'entelechy' and contains a promise which he alone can fulfil. The tragedy of human life is that, more often than not, society instead of enabling him to come into his own, creates conditions as a result of which insurmountable barriers and obstacles are placed in the way of his proper development and growth. The early promise of life is thus nipped in the bud by our thoughtless, callous and irresponsible treatment of the problem of education. In the formative years of the life of the child, he is subjected to impressions which can only dwarf his personality and interfere with his growth. The result is that by our own misdeeds we add to the cases of stunted and arrested growths. Let us recall what Aristotle had to say in respect of freaks and abnormal children: "It is there," he used to say, "that Nature has failed." Whenever we come across a case where that promise of life which was reflected in early childhood is not brought to its full fruition we too should say: "It is there that human education has failed." Human education is a continuation of the very same process which is observable in Nature—the process that we witness in the orderly growth of plants as well as the animal life. It is this contrast between *what a man can be made* into and what *he actually does in fact become* that shows up the tragedy of human life in its utter nakedness. By thoughtless parental action or

by unwise handling of the life of a child or adult in our schools and colleges, we murder outright the best in man. It is this thought which provokes our righteous indignation. How many Shakespeares, Miltons, Mozarts, Rumis, have we not annihilated in the early phases of life's manifestation on Earth! In each case when I come across a case of a tangenial and misdirected human growth I regard that person to be the grave of what once upon a time was a life full of promise. Education, to my way of thinking, is a rational method of helping human life to keep marching forwards on the orthogenic line of its evolution. Education in that sense has yet to be imparted. "We have, it is true," says Dr. Robert Briffault, "something spoken of, and considerably spoken of, as 'education'. But it is scarcely possible to contemplate it seriously as a rational endeavour to discharge the above-named function. So grossly ludicrous, so fantastically archaic is it, that one can hardly employ the same term to designate it as an attempt to organize the transmission of human evolutionary products. There is scarcely anything in common between that which at the present day goes by the name of education, and the actual conquests and achievements of the human mind. It seems, on the contrary, to be the deliberate aim of our pedagogy to wipe out, to conceal, bury, and render inaccessible all that the human mind has acquired of power and knowledge since the fourteenth century, and to secure its victims against any danger of acquiring it. Amid all surviving anachronisms it would be difficult to point to one which has remained so completely primitive and rudimentary as our so-called education or to a subject concerning which even our more advanced conceptions and ideals have so generally failed to rise above the level of our rudimentary practice."

In my opinion, the programme of our National Education should be primarily directed towards securing the fulfilment of at least one objective; and that objective is one of *preparing the growing mind to play a serviceable role in*

the mechanism of society. Every child is, at the time of birth, thoroughly ill-equipped: left to itself it cannot even survive. It must depend on the continuous care and attention of those who know how best to feed, clothe and to protect him. In my opinion, education which he is to receive in the schools and colleges should really be a continuation of the same process; it ought to help the child to hold his own in a hostile environment. By judicious and wise training the growing mind could be made to assimilate all the essentials of knowledge that make for decent conduct. The desire to know and to learn is thus subordinate to a wider and a more dominant purpose: this purpose is no other than the one of adjusting oneself to the totality of the environment in order that successful action be designed. It is in this sense that knowledge is power: this is so because through its deliverance alone, are we enabled to adjust ourselves to the ever-changing pattern of the external environment. Failure to adjust will ultimately lead to the extermination of the individual and to the elimination of the species itself. This is the lesson that one finds writ-large on the pages of human history.

But the pursuit of knowledge by itself is not enough. It is of course necessary in that it confers on us the power, not only of mastering the forces of nature, but also of acquiring self-mastery or what I call "self-ascendency". "The commandment of knowledge," according to Francis Bacon, "is yet higher than the commandment of the *will*: for it is a commandment over the reason, belief and understanding of man which is the highest part of the mind and giveth law to the will itself. It is undeniably true that the monuments of wit and learning are more durable than the monuments of power or of the hands." But when all is said and done, society is not based on knowledge alone, for civilisation is based on the moral law. "If there were no honesty, no respect for law, no obedience to the call of duty, no love of one's neighbour, in a word, no virtue, the whole fabric would totter and fall; neither literature nor art, neither

wealth nor industry, neither the orator nor the policeman would be able to keep it up." A State founded upon interest alone and cemented on fear is but an ignoble and precarious construction. Of what use is the mere pursuit of knowledge if it does not influence our daily conduct and make us better men by inspiring us with higher idealism and by steeling our will for the realisation of the ideals that count.?

This reminds me of what Montaigne says somewhere about the type of knowledge which is not productive of any good, knowledge, which does not influence us in the least. "We are," says he, "in this very like him who having need of fire went to a neighbour's house to fetch it; and finding a very good one there sat down to warm himself without trying to carry any with him home. What good does it do us to have the stomach full of meat when it does not digest and be incorporated with us, if it does not nourish and support us? Such a man has his mind full no doubt but it is full only in the sense that it is *stuffed* and alas! it has only *swelled* but not *grown*."

The problem of education, viewed in this light, requires a restatement of its methodology and technique when we begin considering it in relation to the needs of our country. I say the problem is peculiar to Pakistan in that the emergence of Pakistan itself, regarded as a historical phenomenon, is not only unique and unprecedented in human history, but what is more—its stability and progress is dependent upon the toils, labours and sacrifices not only on the part of those who are to-day at the helm of its affairs but essentially on the untiring efforts of the 'future of our race'; that is to say, of those students who are to-day undergoing that training and preparation which is to qualify them for the service of this country. Education thus must be seen in the context of a wider social activity which is going on within our country. Pakistan as a nation is yet to be born; its spirit and its soul have yet to emerge. The carving out of a territory from India and the setting up of a Central Government to administer that territory gives us only the *opportunity* of

being able to provide, on a sound and a durable basis, for the emergence of that national spirit that is yet to be. All our aspirations and our endeavours have meaning only when they are linked up with a consistent pursuit of this purpose. We have to transform heterogeneous elements that compose the population of our country into a homogeneous nation, so that they might successfully come to reflect the National spirit!

What is this 'national spirit', 'national consciousness', this national character? National character is something *unique and distinctive:* it is an "*unanalysable whole*" and is not something that flows as a matter of *necessity* from the operation of factors that go to make a nation. National character is on the whole, and in the main, something which is *made* by human effort; it follows that there is no such thing as 'a given and ineluctable national character which *stands out and conditions the members of a nation or confers on them any hall-mark of individual or collective destiny.*' As has been rightly said, character is not destiny to each nation: each nation makes its character and its destiny. "We cannot," says Ernest Baker, "therefore draw up an indictment against a whole nation as eternally accursed or sing its praises as being eternally blessed, by reason only of the destiny of an inevitable character suspended as if from above for ever. Let us rather maintain that a nation is engaged in an eternal turbulence of generation and regeneration and let us assign to it for each age the burden and responsibility for what it makes of itself." Thanks to the awakening of the critical spirit, the emancipation of the individual from the yoke and tyranny of political and social institutions of the past, and a widespread system of contemporary national education, we have had conferred on us greater powers than ever before in history, of making ourselves more nearly into what we would have ourselves be.

The new State of Pakistan has not, as yet, manifested any national characteristics which may be regarded as

distinctive or unique or peculiar to itself. It appears that no consistent philosophy compatible with the aspirations of the peoples of the new State has yet been worked out. It also appears that this has not even been regarded as something important and vital for the orderly progress and steady expansion of the new State. Other matters, less important, regarded from the historical perspective, are claiming a great deal of attention at the hands of those who are avowedly engaged in the task of nation-building.

Let us thank God that an overwhelming majority of our people are tied together by the bond of a common faith: to all intents and purposes we participate in the common religious practices that have been sanctioned by our religion and which have been consecrated to us by the labours and sacrifices of those who have gone before us. This by itself is a great thing indeed, but we cannot forget that this common faith of which we talk so much and about which we are only too often prepared to engage ourselves in acrimonious controvercies, is not, in any manner, controlling our daily conduct and defining our attitude to the problems of our State-policy. Anyone walking in the streets of Pakistan will see ample evidence of this. All social maladjustments, criminal statistics, black-marketing practices, violence, disruption, attempts to destroy the very foundation of civil power by unconstitutional means, are indications of the fact that the law of God sits only on our lips and has not descended deep into the nerve and fibre of our being and that, although we say we conform to that law, in fact we know that we do not. The task that devolves on the young students in Pakistan today is to assimilate the spirit of a really religious life and make a consistent attempt to reflect it in all they do. Not by words but by deeds shall we be judged, and so adjudged, if we are honest to ourselves, we must say that we have a very poor record of our achievements to present.

The young minds, let me hope and pray, are not yet cramped by the narrow prison walls of prejudices and

preconception and therefore can respond to the call of conscience and their eyes can yet see the light of truth. Let them then become fully aware of the fact that their country stands on the cross-roads of history, and upon such use as they can make of the little time that is still at their disposal, will depend the future of Pakistan. If they unconditionally devote themselves to the task of realising this idea, they shall have—and of this I am certain—in their own day, witnessed the dawn of a new day. Let them remember that nothing belongs to man except his effort. Even our bodily life is not ours, much less our mental life. Our bodies are handed over to us by our parents and in the making of our mental life numerous teachers play their part. We are the inheritors of the wisdom of the ages which is treasured and embalmed for us in the books that our ancestors have left for us. It is for us to draw as much inspiration as we can from what they have felt and found and having gained that rare insight into the laws that regulate the course of events in the universe, to reflect it in our daily lives in order that God's purposes may come to prevail.

This general statement of the basic attitude to education which I recommend the student community of Pakistan to adopt has several implications when we begin to examine its impact on the practical programme which they are to pursue. I can only hint here what that programme should be: needless to say, it would require considerable time before the recommendations I make can be defended in principle and the wisdom underlying them can be perceived.

The student community must fight first, within their own ranks, those narrow, parochial and provincial prejudicies that are eating into the very vitals of our social organisations. By all means let them develop their provincial culture; their literature, their art, their music; and let them be justly proud of it. The provincialism that is to be deprecated and discarded is of a different brand altogether; it has the tendency in it of destroying the solidarity of Pakistan.

The student community can play a very vital role in fighting the menace of provincialism in this sense. When they go back to their homes during their vacations if they are living in boarding-houses, or when they go about in the streets of Pakistan on their daily round, they should never be weary of disclaiming the evils of provincialism in the sense just described. They, in their own way, can thus become triumphant missionaries for the cause of Pakistan's unity and solidarity. The second recommendation I would make is that, during their spare time, they could undertake the task of educating their less fortunate friends who, for want of adequate facilities and proper opportunities, are not able to find their way to schools and colleges. If every student could be persuaded to find some time out of the twenty-four hours of his daily round to teach another student at least how to read and write, we will have started a powerful movement towards the spread of universal education. This activity on his part will, of course, be of immense use to the nation, and what is more important, it would ennoble, edify and purify him in the process. There is some hidden law which seems to be in action everywhere and this law is that our individual progress is in some strange way dependent upon the extent to which we can give away what we love the most. This applies as much to material as to spiritual wealth. The giving of a coin to a beggar may be useful to him but what is decidedly more useful is to *free* the man who is staggering under the weight of ignorance and of illiteracy. Our inward purity and cleanliness depend on our capacity to give away that which we have received; the highest ideal, of course, being that one should strive to reach an inner condition where one is able to give without so much as even entertaining any hope of a reward. It is for this reason that the Holy Book says, "You cannot be near God unless and until you give up that which you love the most."

Finally, let every student in Pakistan know that in the coming struggle it is he who is to play a very important role: he must not expect much assistance from others in

this behalf and he must therefore take the problem of his education in his own hands. Given a longing to improve oneself, the rest becomes easy of attainment. God has His own ways of helping his servants, and wherever a human heart fondly looks up to Him for guidance, He always shows it the way.

'A really educated person' is one who constantly realises that anything he does or even thinks is not the product of one race, one religion, one country, one language or one class; that he is, in effect, the product of the world as a whole. It is therefore his duty to cooperate with the rest of the world to improve it rather than consort with those who for sheer love of mischief are busy in obstructing the march of mankind towards the goal that counts. It is this attitude of mind that it should be the object of education to encourage and foster.

I believe that all the decisive battles for the glory, progress and prosperity of Pakistan will be fought—and either won or lost—in its schools and in its colleges: its libraries and laboratories are going to be the theatres of its future action. I therefore urge the student community of Pakistan to fulfil this mission and play the honourable role which history has assigned to them. It is they who have to bring about the awakening of national spirit; it is they who have to lay the foundation on which must be built a lasting and durable civilisation. May we trust that they will work to this purpose? It seems we are already late by five years.

(1952)

Give me liberty to know, utter and to argue freely according to conscience above all liberties.

JOHN MILTON.

* * * *

At its best the Press is the servant and guardian of institutions: at its worst it is a means by which a few exploit social disorganisation to their own end. In the degree to which institutions fail to function the unscrupulous journalist can fish in troubled waters and conscientious one must gamble with uncertainties.

The Press is no substitute for institutions. It is like the beam of a searchlight that moves restlessly about bringing one episode and then another out of darkness into vision. Men cannot do the work of the world by this light alone. They cannot govern society by episodes, incidents, eruptions. It is only when they work by a steady light of their own that the Press, when it is turned upon them, reveals a situation intelligible enough for a popular decision.

WALTER LIPPMANN.

* * * *

The Law of things is that they who tamper with veracity from whatever motive are tampering with the vital force of Human Progress.

LORD MORLEY.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRESS.

I

The expression "Freedom of Information" by itself does not suggest much; if anything, it raises a riddle for the rational mind: it does not, for instance, tell us for whom this freedom of information is to be, much less, the purpose for which freedom of information is being canvassed. But, despite these difficulties, it must be conceded, that the expression "Freedom of Information" epitomises a demand of a far-reaching character; and having regard to the way in which the expression is being used nowadays, it would not be wrong to say that it has, more or less, become a watchword, nay—an important slogan of the age. By freedom of information is usually meant, the freedom to obtain information in regard to any matter of topical interest, or any matter of public importance in which an individual may be interested.

In practical parlance, freedom of information implies freedom to report in the newspapers or through news-agencies; and with this freedom is allied the freedom to correct what is false, distorted or tendentious. The right to be informed thus embodies a principle of far-reaching importance. There are obvious limitations that restrict the operation of this principle in practice; but, before I deal with them, it becomes necessary for me to set forth, in as few words as possible, the practical and importance relevance of a discussion of the present kind.

Almost all over the globe in recent times, there is discoverable an upsurge of the wave of individual liberty. The philosophy of humanism preaches that man is not to be regarded as a mere means: he is an end-in-himself.

Human personality is sacred and cannot be allowed to be exploited or surrendered at the altar of the mere non-human forces. The declaration and enforcement of fundamental human rights, the recognition and appreciation of the dignity and worth of the human personality, and the belief in the equality of rights of men and women, are some of the essential articles of faith with those who consider themselves the high priests of humanity.

The very preamble to the Charter of the United Nations affirms the belief in the sanctity of the human personality. It defends the inviolability of human rights on the ground that, unless we respect the claims of human personality, it is not possible to extinguish and eradicate those tensions within the soul of man that beget war and bring about destruction of all that is valuable in life. In order that human personality may develop to its full stature, it is necessary that it should be properly educated and kept well-informed about its place in the scheme of things. It is being steadily realised that every individual must be freely allowed to play his part in society: he must be given the opportunity and the necessary incentive to understand the grammar of the world situation in order that he may make his contribution towards the shaping of our national and international policies. In order that man may be helped to take correct decisions and thus be in a position successfully to regulate his private and public conduct, it is necessary to establish conditions that will ensure that his mind will not be subjected to falsehoods.

Of the many conditions that must be established, the most essential is that which prescribes that no barriers shall be allowed to be erected to obstruct the free flow of information. In this age of propaganda, every effort is being made not only to suppress the truth but to suggest falsehood; not only to misinform and misguide, but, what is decidely more dangerous—so to destroy the very capacity

for clear thinking that even when accidentally true information reaches the human mind the latter is not able to recognize it as such. Those who have given some thought to this aspect of the problem and have attempted to devise ways and means of rescuing the human mind from the farrago of false information and secure it against the poison of propagandistic literature know that there is no golden rule, no royal road, by recourse to which this object can be easily attained. The human mind, particularly in the formative years of its early development, is liable to be so deeply impressed with the blandishments of a false ideology that any attempt made at a later stage to rescue it from its pernicious consequences is doomed to failure.

Ever since the conclusion of the last War, the United Nations has been engaged in considering ways and means by which the right to obtain accurate information could be effectively guaranteed. It is true that the United Nations cannot intervene in the domestic affairs of the member nations, but it can exercise a moral influence and persuade them in the interest of promoting international understanding so to shape their domestic policies as to give effect to a higher principle; it can, with their consent and cooperation, give a proper direction to those agencies within the State that cater to the need of supplying information to the individual. With this end in view, under the auspices of the United Nations, at Geneva, a conference on the "Freedom of Information" was held during the period from March 23 to April 21, 1948. Earlier, to be precise, on the 15th of August 1947, under Resolution No. 74, subclause (5), adopted by the Economic and Social Council, the Secretary-General had been asked to request member-States to supply information in regard to the points mentioned in the questionnaire drawn up for the purpose. Delegations representing the Governments of 54 member countries, including Pakistan, attended the Conference, considered the information supplied by several

countries and discussed the problems connected with the freedom of information and of the Press. The proceedings at the Conference brought into sharp focus some of the most crucial questions about the right of citizens to be fully informed of happenings in diverse parts of the world, so that they might be able to take adequate interest in discussing and deciding international problems. Thus it has come about that, ever since the last War, expressions like "the freedom of conscience", "freedom of speech", "freedom from want", "freedom from fear" have become the stock-in-trade of all those diligent crusaders who are pledged to champion the cause for which the United Nations has been launched into existence. Freedom of Information, and of the Press, is just one Article from that manifesto of international significance in which are mentioned other equally important fundamental rights and liberties.

2

Freedom of information necessarily implies freedom of expression, just even as the concavity of the shield implies its convexity—all, of course, depending on the perspective from which the matter is viewed. Freedom of expression assumes diverse forms: it may reflect itself in the spoken or the written word or be embodied in other media of publicity. Of the important media of information mention must be made of newspapers, of news-broadcasts and news-reels. Freedom of speech has had, down the ages, to reckon with the shackles and restraints placed upon it by the Government or by other agencies like the Church. There has always been an attempt by those who wield political or economic power within the State to suppress the expression of opinion on the part of those who are out of power; and that is done with the obvious intention of perpetuating their own hold and authority on the people.

In the earlier stages of human history we find that it is the oppressed minorities who, by resort either to an open

declaration of their hostility to vested interests, or by re-course to some subterranean device of making their opinion felt and heard, bring up to the surface of society opinions which attract the attention of others and by their dissemination ultimately come to undermine the foundations of the established power within the State. In later times, however, the cause of freedom of expression triumphed because of the general acceptance of the philosophic truth that no progress in any direction is possible unless the people are allowed to express their opinions freely. In a given society if the religious, political or economic order continues to prevail, it is solely because ideas which contradict the premises on which have been reared the foundations for that order have not, as yet, gained currency. As soon as the light of a true idea emerges, the night of ignorance and falsehood disappears. Little wonder, therefore, that men in authority shudder in the face of a powerful idea—although they might be prepared to ignore the march of a powerful army across their frontiers. The authors and publishers of new ideas are, therefore, exposed to penalties of all kinds—penalties like the deprivation of liberty, forfeiture of their property, involvement in social disgrace, and sometimes even death.

Finding that the punishment of offenders who express themselves against the established order of things. does not succeed in altogether suppressing the dissemination of prejudicial opinion, the laws of the State sometimes provide for what is called pre-censorship of the Press or of any other written material which, it is believed, would offend against those laws. Of course, the practice of censorship of the Press in times of internal disturbances or during the period of war is not incompatible with the due maintenance of the right of the individual to be informed, but such a practice can be defended only on the ground of expediency. We all realize that if during times of stress and strain prejudicial and hostile ideas are allowed to gain currency, they may, and, in fact, they are bound to. interfere with the

maintenance of law and order or the efficient prosecution of war. Therefore cases are conceivable where such a type of restraint on the publication of news or comment is demanded by the logic of the situation. But more often than not, this type of restraint is imposed, not because it is believed that that is the only way to secure the stability of society, but because those who are in power are afraid that the publication of what are glibly described as 'dangerous ideas' may not undermine their authority and ultimately bring about their own extinction.

It is difficult precisely to determine the kind of news the publication of which may be deemed permissible in principle. Hitherto reports on topics and events in various countries have been variously free. In some countries it may be treason to report the stage of the harvest, or the size of the population; in others even the movement of troops can be reported with impunity. The 1914-18 War brought to notice the increasing necessity for secrecy in public affairs in countries where there used to be none. The great technical discoveries have also imposed secrecy on trade associations; so that what started as a private discovery to be shared with all as, for instance, Lord Rutherford's discovery of the secrets of the atom, led in the end to what are nowadays the most jealously guarded Government secrets, the disclosure of which have come to be sanctioned by abnormal punishment. The discovery of penicillin on the other hand, and the method of its preparation, are no longer a secret although its original discoverer, Sir Alexander Fleming, could have conveniently kept the discovery to himself if he had so wanted. It is therefore hard to draw a line or to assert a principle in terms of which freedom of information as such can be limited to a given species of news or opinions. Has the line to be drawn, for instance, between what is beneficent and what confers power? And then, what is beneficent and what is not beneficent, is not, after all, such a simple question to answer.

3

The Law has, therefore, to step in to impose limits on the right of each individual to express himself. Every democratic government guarantees to its citizens free expression of views and free presentation of news, but it also imposes limits within which this right is to be exercised. In the absence of these restraints, the possibility of the abuse of the right conferred becomes undoubtedly greater than it would be otherwise.

Freedom of expression is guaranteed in some of the written constitutions of the world as one of the fundamental rights of the citizens. But the exercise of the right is made expressly subject to certain restrictions, like the observance of the directions furnished by the ordinary law of libel and sedition. A man can, it should be realised, by the expression of prejudicial views, impair the stability of a society. He may also, by thoughtless and callous disregard of the feelings of others, express himself in a manner which may lower them in the estimation of their fellowmen.

J. S. Mill, for instance, in his famous work *On Liberty*, published in 1859, justified the curtailment of individual liberty in the interests of those whose liberty would be assailed if there were no limits imposed by law. We have to prevent the possibility of any harm resulting to others. "He (*i.e.* J. S. Mill,)" says J. B. Bury, "bases his principle not on abstract rights, but on 'utility', in the largest sense, grounded on the permanent interests of man as a progressive being. He then uses the following argument to show that to silence opinion and discussion is always contrary to those permanent interests. Those who would suppress an opinion (it is assumed that they are honest) deny its truth, but they are not infallible. They may be wrong or right, or partly wrong and partly right. (1) If they are wrong and the opinion they would crush is true, they have robbed, or done their utmost to rob, mankind of a truth. They will say: 'But we were justified, for we exercised our judgment to the best of our ability, and are we to be told

that because our judgment is fallible we are not to use it? We forbade the propagation of an opinion which we were sure was false and pernicious; this implies no greater claim to infallibility than any act done by public authority.' If we are to act at all we must assume our own opinion to be true. To this Mill acutely replies: There is the greatest difference between assuming an opinion to be true, because with every opportunity for contesting it, it has not been refuted, and assuming its truth for the purpose of not permitting its refutation. Complete liberty of contradicting and disproving our opinion is the very condition which justifies us in assuming its truth for purposes of action, and on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of being right.

"(2) If the received opinion which it is sought to protect against the intrusion of error is true, the suppression of discussion is still contrary to general utility. A received opinion may happen to be true (it is very seldom entirely true); but a rational certainty can only be secured by the fact that it has been fully canvassed but has not been shaken.

"Commoner and more important is (3) the case where the conflicting doctrines share the truth between them. Here Mill has little difficulty in proving the utility of supplementing one-sided popular truths by other truths which popular opinion omits to consider. And he observes that if either of the opinions which share the truth has a claim not merely to be tolerated but to be encouraged, it is the one which happens to be held by the minority, since this is the one 'which for the time being represents the neglected interests'. He takes the doctrines of Rousseau, which might conceivably have been suppressed as pernicious. To the self-complacent eighteenth century those doctrines came as 'a salutary shock, dislocating the compact mass of one-sided opinion'. The current opinions were indeed nearer to the truth than Rousseau's; they contained much less of error; 'nevertheless there lay in Rousseau's doctrine

and has floated down the stream of opinion along with it, a considerable amount of exactly those truths which the popular opinion wanted; and these are the deposits which were left behind when the flood subsided."

So much then about the justification of the liberty of thought as far as it concerns the right of the individual to express himself. Now a word about the position of the Press in relation to this very question.

4

The freedom of the Press is no more, and no less, than the freedom of an ordinary individual to express himself. The Press, like any ordinary citizen in the country, has the right to say what it likes, provided it does not, by so doing, come in conflict with the law relating to slander, libel or sedition. The freedom of the Press does not imply that the Press has any extra-privileges and that it can, therefore, say certain things with impunity which an individual cannot. "The law of libel, the chief terror of the pressmen," says Thomas Dawson, "applies in the same way to the writer of a business letter and to the man who chalks a defamatory notice on the wall as to the journalist. The street corner orator has felt the pressure of the blaphemy laws as frequently as the pamphleteer. Contempt of court is certainly not peculiarly a Press offence; whilst even copyright covers things neither written nor printed and its infringement is by no means confined to publishers. Except in regard to a few minor matters, the law is not directed particularly against the Press. . . Such freedom as the Press enjoys is the result partly of the absence of special restrictions but principally due to the tradition which has become firmly established only within the last hundred years, whereby the utmost tolerance is to be accorded by public opinion to all publications so long as they do not tend to endanger the State, outrage morality or unjustifiably cause injury to individuals."

The above legal position has been set forth with

admirable lucidity in the case of *Arnold v. King Emperor of India* by Lord Shaw of Dunfermline as follows :—

"Their Lordships regret to find that there appeared on the one side in this case the time-worn fallacy that some kind of privilege attaches to the profession of the Press as distinguished from the members of the public.

"The freedom of the journalist is an ordinary part of the freedom of the subject, and to whatever lengths the subject in general may go, so also may the journalist, but apart from statute law, his privilege is no other and no higher. The responsibilities which attach to his power in the dissemination of printed matter may, and in the case of a conscientious journalist do, make him more careful; but the range of his assertions, his criticisms, or his comments, is as wide as, and no wider than, that of any other subject. No privilege attaches to his position."

The extent of control that a democratic Government can justifiably claim to impose on the freedom of the Press will ultimately have to satisfy the test of a principle which may be formulated thus: How far, in the absence of the proposed control on the freedom of the Press, the Press itself, instead of promoting the cause of guiding public opinion, will be or is likely to be exploited as an instrument for defeating the very purpose for which it claims to justify its existence? The power of the Press, as we all know, is enormous. It can work as an instrument of purifying public life, of chastening public taste and of giving a constructive lead in the matter of settling questions of public importance: it can, on the other hand, abdicating these high and noble ideals, debase itself and become an engine of oppression by pandering to low and vulgar tastes and by indulging in those malpractices with which, the 'profiteering' and the 'sensational' Press, has always been associated in the public mind. In the days when the power of the Press was not so great, no need was felt of defining the legal limits within which its operations could be confined. With power must go, hand in hand, a sense of

responsibility: where, as a matter of fact, the Press does show a sense of responsibility, the law will not step in to control its activities. In such cases the offending Press is relegated to the judgment of public opinion. But in countries where public opinion itself is weak and is not able to act as a powerful brake, the law must step in to supplement the sanction of public opinion by the coercive power of the State. A man must either rule himself and observe the limits within which he must act or the policeman will have to be stationed by his side to control him. It is for these reasons that Press laws exist; their nature and number are as much a reflex of what the Press does or does not do within the body politic of a given country as they serve as pointers for the assessment of its potentialities (for doing good or making mischief, as the case may be,) by those who are charged with the duty of framing laws within the country. Just as a country will have the government it deserves, so also the Press will get from the law the treatment it deserves. The essential thing to remember is that the Press must not only assume the responsibility for the objective reporting of news, but it must also entertain and instruct its reading public. So long as that ideal is kept in view and an attempt is made to realise it, journalists will not only succeed in keeping themselves within the law, but what is more, they will be able to build a type of public opinion which will redound to their credit. . .

5

Almost every age is dominated by a representative type of an individual who becomes not only the bearer of its cultural tradition but also the director of its future evolution. In that sense, it is the journalist who, in my opinion, more than anyone else, represents the dominant type of our age. It is he who embodies the power to fashion, for good or for evil, the course of coming events; indeed, in this age of ours, a great deal depends on the spirit and the manner in which he is able to wield that power and shoulder all those

responsibilities that have been passed on to him by the spirit of the age and the moral mood of humanity.

This is the same thing as saying that a journalist has a mission to fulfil: his peculiar position in the scheme of things gives him his opportunity of fashioning, moulding, nay even engineering public opinion: and, in these days of Democracy, as long as "public opinion" is regarded as that last court of appeal before which must be justified our economico-political policies and is regarded as an effective weapon for the manipulation and management of human affairs, so long will the journalist continue to dominate our society.

In the last resort, according to Walter Lippmann, people act upon the picture which is created in their minds by the 'information' and the 'comment' they receive from outside. Nobody is in direct contact with the actual course and movement of world events. Everyone depends for his information upon that class of persons who are called reporters: public opinion itself is nothing but a telling expression for that type of picture of our social and political environment, in the making of which, a considerable mass of mankind participates. This public opinion, in the last resort is moulded by the Press.

The world, as it prefigures in the consciousness of the 20th century man, is radically different from the type of the world that his precursors were able to represent to themselves. Important events all over the world are reported, edited, and transmitted, in the shape of the "printed word" and brought to our breakfast table for our information. Nothing is too remote or too irrelevant for the modern Press to capture; its comments are not confined merely to problems of local import. Considerable data, on which our thinking and judgment depends, is supplied to us by the Press. We have no means of checking their authenticity; and in fact, such is the persuasive power of the printed word that we are, as a rule, ready to believe anything and everything provided it has appeared in print.

The complex pattern of our economic, social and political problems and their far-reaching implications, cannot be understood fully by the average man. Here the journalist intervenes and tries to present what is complex and intricate in simple, direct, and precise language and thus makes it easily intelligible. We have, thanks to our slavish submission to the modern Press, lost all capacity for courageous and independent thinking. A journalist who has a flare for employing a brief, telling and an incisive expression has therefore the opportunity of transmitting to us almost anything that he may want to influence us with. Thus whether we wish it or no, the fact remains that the formation of public opinion is considerably influenced by the journalist and, no matter how reluctant we may be to allow our minds to submit slavishly to the inflow and impact of the news supplied or the comment offered by him, it is pretty obvious that we cannot escape his grip.

The rapidity of social intercourse, the fleeting character of events, the conflicting interpretations that are bestowed on important events by official propagandists, the extremely small measure of time that we, in this age of speed, can afford to devote to the study of these events—all these factors conspire to create a situation in which, a student of the modern world, who wishes to understand and participate in the movement of world events, has necessarily to depend, and depend slavishly, upon the printed word. We are virtually ruled by the paper we read. This, in turn, means that the ruling type is the journalist before whom the modern man must inevitably surrender.

The writers of serious books on current topics, world affairs, trends and cross-trends of international trade, etc., cannot compete with the journalist in the matter of influencing public opinion for the simple reason that their learned books and scholarly treatises are couched in a vernacular which is not easily intelligible to the average reader. They are, as a matter of fact, too long-winded and verbose

for the impatient Twentieth Century reader to get on with. We are eager to be taught, in as short a time as possible, the pith and substance of their contribution rather than he impressed by the logical character of their argument, or the comprehensiveness of the data on which their reasoning proceeds and their findings are based. Their word, alas ! must await the advent of the day when the busy reader who means to keep abreast of his age, has the time to dive deep into the 'bulky' books written upon the subject. The average man has no time to spare for an undertaking of this kind and those individuals who have the inclination, the energy, and capacity to do this are so very few and far between as to be practically negligible. Most of us have no time nor, indeed, the means, much less the patience or the inclination, to read original works on important topics and we are content to pick up what we can from the daily paper about the prevailing opinions on the problems of our age. In short, the attitude of most of us resembles that of the inmate of a big hotel who, when awakened from his sleep in his room on the top floor of the building by the waiter with the cry: "Sir, wake up, the whole hotel is on fire!" instead of running for his life, sank back into his soft bed saying: "O! please, don't disturb me in my sleep: I will read all about it in the morning paper."

Let it be noted further that there can be for us no such thing as a direct and objective perception of the events as they occur. The distance between the event and the observer is so immense that the contact between the two can only be established by an intermediate agency, the reporter of the daily news. Those who are interested in the political and economic implications of these events cannot afford to undertake the establishment of a direct relationship with the event they propose to study. Ultimately, when all is said and done, even they have to take the data as it is supplied. Sometimes the data supplied is conflicting, and there then arises the difficult duty of having to choose between the rival versions. Our choice ultimately is controlled by the

estimate that we have of the veracity of a particular news agency or paper, and the extent to which, in our opinion, the report, appearing in a given paper or supplied by a given news agency, is unbiased.

Our relations with our fellowmen depend on the picture that we have of their character and the estimate we form of the their possible reaction to anything that one may do or omit to do. This is also true of a national or international reaction to an event which occurs at some far-flung place; our reaction to it proceeds from the nature of the reports we get of it either from the Press or from the Radio. In principle, both the spoken and the printed words that play such a decisive role into the making of public opinion are controlled by journalists-afterall the news editor is as indispensible to the Radio as he is to the Press.

Take any contemporary event, say, recent Revolution in Egypt, the Anglo-Iranian dispute, the position of Jews in the modern world, the Presidential Election in America; in each case, you will agree that our reaction to these events is based not upon a direct perception of these events as they occur but upon the *picture* that is created in our minds by the impact of the printed or the spoken word presented to us by those whose duty it is to report or comment upon world-news.

As is notorious, all kinds of obstacles are placed in our way in an attempt to prevent the truth from reaching our ears: there is a considerable amount of propagandist skill employed by private and public bodies to distort the actual evidence, just to create a type of picture on our minds which will, so far as they are concerned, elicit a favourable response from us.

But, regardless of the difficulties we encounter in the matter of knowing the course of events as they occur, the fact remains that we have no other source, no other method save the one of listening to the journalist. We cannot undertake a journey to those far off places for the simple reason that we have neither the time nor the energy to do all that,

and what is more, assuming it were possible to do all this, the barriers to the free flow of true information are far greater for those who are near these events than those who are looking at them from a distance. In their case, there are many disadvantages. They do not have that perspective and detachment which it is so essential to have for the just appreciation of the import of an event. In order to have this, you must desire distance and not intimacy with the events. But assuming that this difficulty can be got over, one cannot eliminate the possibility of the attempt that is generally made by those who are interested in suppressing the real picture emerging about these events. We, ultimately, even when we are dealing with local events, depend upon reports; those who actually see the events occur usually have good reasons for not describing them realistically...

We have so far been considering a situation where the reader of the news is presumed to be a man who is capable of reading the news correctly. But in a vast majority of cases, observation shows that what we do read in a paper is really just what we put into it.

Every book or paper is after all only paper *plus* printer's ink. Reading, as a psychological phenomenon, is far too complex a process to imply directness of contact between the meaning intended to be conveyed by the use of the printed word and the percipient consciousness that means to assimilate it. The newspaper reading public do not read the same paper: each reader reads it as it is refracted through the prism of his prejudices. This is inherent in all perception whether it is visual, auditory or tactual: imagination interferes with the impact of every impression and more often than not, distorts it.

We are also affected by what Walter Lippmann calls "Stereotypes". Here is a case in point quoted by Walter Lippmann in his book *Public Opinion*—

"At a Congress of Psychology in Gottingen an interesting experiment was made with a crowd of presumably trained observers.

"Not far from the hall in which the Congress was sitting there was a public fete with a masked ball. Suddenly the door of the hall was thrown open and a clown rushed in madly pursued by a negro, revolver in hand. They stopped in the middle of the room fighting; the clown fell, the negro leapt upon him, fired and then both rushed out of the hall. The whole incident hardly lasted twenty seconds.

"The President asked those present to write immediately a report since there was sure to be a judicial inquiry. Forty reports were sent in. Only one had less than 20 per cent. of mistakes in regard to the principal facts; 14 had 20 per cent. to 40 per cent. of mistakes; 12 from 40 per cent. to 50 per cent.; 13 more than 50 per cent. Moreover in 24 accounts 10 per cent. of the details were pure inventions and this proportion was exceeded in ten accounts and diminished in six. Briefly, a quarter of the accounts were false.

"It goes without saying that the whole scene had been arranged and even photographed in advance. The ten false reports may then be relegated to the category of tales and legends; 24 accounts are half legendary, and six have a value approximating to exact evidence."

By way of explanation. Mr Lippmann adds:

"Thus out of 40 trained observers writing a responsible account of a scene that had just happened before their eyes more than a majority saw a scene that had not taken place. What then did they see? One would suppose that it was easier to tell what had occurred than to invent something that had not occurred. They saw their stereotype of such a brawl. All of them had in the course of their lives acquired a series of images of brawls and these images flickered before their eyes. In one man they displaced less than 20 per cent. of the actual scene, in 13 men more than half. In 34 out of 40 observers the stereotypes pre-empted at least one tenth of the scene."

This illustrates in a very forceful way how information on its way to human consciousness is intercepted, mutilated and distorted by the projection of the readers' own

prejudices, patterns of thought, and stereotypes.

One of the riddles of sociology—a riddle for which, as far as I know, no satisfactory solution has as yet been found—is to account for the emergence of such a thing as 'public opinion.' After all, public opinion is not the same thing as a private opinion on a public question. Each one of us has, no doubt, a private opinion on a given public question. The problem, however, is to account for the emergence from private individual consciousness of such a phenomenon as public opinion. It is no answer to the problem to say that public opinion is merely an opinion on a given question about which each individual has the awareness that it is shared by several members of the public. This is no explanation, for the simple reason that the reality of "public opinion," its objective existence and character, once again, are being accounted for in terms of a private opinion.

By an analogy, however, we can solve the problem by comparing this phenomenon with what is observable in the physical world: just as psychologically each man sees his own world, but nevertheless he is aware that what he sees exists independently of him and is commonly perceived by everyone else, so also it seems that, the perception of the social cosmos, of phenomenon like public opinion is practically based on the same principle.

6

The power which a journalist admittedly has, implies a corresponding obligation: the obligation to be conscious of that power and the duty to exercise that power in a responsible manner. He must therefore drill his mind. He must be objective and accurate in reporting events as he sees them. He must have an intellectual background to be able to appreciate the historical significance of the events he has to report. He must have lofty and noble ideals in the light of which he may be able to adjudge the worth and the value of an opinion based on the data he is reporting.

It is no doubt true that in addition to *informing* us about the world, a journalist is there to *instruct*, to *amuse* and *entertain* us and unless he does so, not only will he not be heard but what is more, he will be displaced by another journalist who is able to capture the attention of the reading public by provoking their curiosity and by appealing to that side of their nature which he can conveniently exploit. But even the desire to interest and to amuse cannot confer a licence on the journalist to transgress the limits of fair and accurate reporting. He must learn the art of leaving the least to himself.

A journalist must become the moral force of his age. He must advocate the right cause, he must be loyal to his mission of promulgating and publishing the truth and strive for the formation of healthy public opinion on questions that count. He must specialise in the art of social engineering; he ought to have a universal mind and a capacity for contemplating the totality of the social environment in which a given event is cast. In order to judge a part properly he must know the whole. His viewpoint must not be narrow and parochial; he must be the defender, not of false slogans, but of true ideologies. In the conflict and clash of petty party interests he must learn to side with the truth, as he discovers it. Above all, he should not stoop to the level of personal vituperation and abuse.

The affairs of governments and the patterns of modern living are very complicated indeed. In all civilised countries, committees of experts advise the administration on the formulation of political or economic policy. This often demands a patient investigation of the available statistics and a study of human nature, that is, comprehension of the psychological and biological foundation of our behaviour.

A journalist who means to channelise the flow of information and to offer helpful comments on the significance of what is occurring in the modern world, must have either expert knowledge on the several questions he is called upon to tackle or must depend on the expert advice of those in

whose judgment he can have implicit confidence.

If we do not allow a man to drive a car without a licence merely because, in case he did not know his job, he would be exposing by his rash act the life of pedestrians to a grave risk; or if we, for the same reason, cannot, allow a dangerous animal to move about unchained in the streets of our town; then with less justification, I say, can we permit a journalist to ply his pen recklessly and irresponsibly in the matter of disseminating news and offering comments and thus allow him to shake the very stability of our State. There should, therefore, be a regular institution for the education of journalists just as there are colleges for the education of lawyers, engineers and doctors. Obtaining a degree after the completion of a course of training, should be a condition precedent to allowing a journalist to deal with such inflammable and dangerous material as the "printed word".

There is also, in our country, need for the "democratisation" of the Press. Today, one individual, merely by owning the means of printing, can express what he wishes to say in the name of public opinion. Instead of writing a private letter or a private comment, he gets it printed and passes it on in the name of public opinion. It is thus, in some cases, the mere fact of a thing being printed which confers on it the status of public opinion. The capacity for influencing public opinion in our country should not be confused with the ability to own the printing machines.

I am not, as yet, very familiar with the conditions that obtain in the Press in Pakistan, but the little that I know of them, convinces me that most of the papers are owned by private individuals and not by limited-liability companies. And this monopolistic tendency to own newspapers ought to be combated before the Press in Pakistan can be made broad-based and truly democratic.

I need hardly add that the only other way to improve the standard of journalism is to improve the working conditions of journalists. The Press laws also require a great

deal of change in order that they should conform to the standards of journalism that are found in other civilised countries of the modern world.

7

I admit the task of a journalist is becoming increasingly difficult. He must be a jack-of-all-trades, and must know that the job of gathering news from thousand sources is so complex that unless he "scorns delights and lives laborious days" he will not be able to conform to the standard of accuracy in reporting which is demanded of him. The modern Press has become a highly complex machine to operate. Its organisation includes, on the business side, the advertising manager, the circulation manager, the promotion manager, the mechanical superintendent and the auditor. On its editorial side, it has the managing editor, the city editor, the news editor,the finance editor, the women's editor, to say nothing of a vast assortment of other reporters and correspondents. News gathering is as skilful and intricate an affair as politics, modern finance or banking.

In order to assist in the growth of a healthy type of journalist, as I mentioned earlier, it is necessary to establish institutions where professional training may be imparted to the young and the uninitiated. In America, more than anywhere else in the world, institutions for the training of journalists are finding a great deal of favour. In conservative countries, like England, there is a distrust of all academic training. There they believe that the best teacher is experience itself, and they more often than not forget the old adage, "Experience keeps a costly school but the fools shall learn at no other." Then there are those Associations of journalists that have, what may be characterised, as a 'trade union bias.' They claim to be custodians of the rights and privileges of journalists and provide the forum for the vindication of their demands.

The dignity of the profession of journalism, however,

is not to be assessed in terms of the sort of inflated demands which its votaries are wont to make: it all depends upon the consistent practice by them of a code of journalistic ethics. And for that reason the desirability of formulating an international code of ethics for the journalist has found favour with the United Nations. They have set forth, after a great deal of discussion, what they consider to be the essential articles of that code. This code is so well-known that I do not propose to read it out to you. But I would like to refer to Article 3 of the Draft Convention on the Freedom of Information which runs as follows :—

"Each Contracting State shall encourage the establishment and functioning within its territory of one or more non-official organisations of persons employed in the dissemination of information to the public, in order to promote the observance by such persons of high standards of professional conduct, and in particular:

(a) To report facts without prejudice and in their proper context and to make comments without malicious intent;

(b) To facilitate the solution of the economic, social and humanitarian problems of the world as a whole and the free interchange of information bearing on such problems;

(c) To help promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination;

(d) To help maintain international peace and security; and

(e) To counteract the persistent spreading of false or distorted reports which promote hatred or prejudice against States, persons or groups of different races, language, religion or philosophical conviction."

It will be observed that the chief responsibility for promoting high standards of professional conduct among newspapermen has been rightly placed on non-official organisations of persons employed in the dissemination of information to the public. The role of the State has been confined simply to encouraging the establishment

and functioning within its territory of such non-official organisations. This is as it should be. It is always desirable that reforms in society should come from within rather than be imposed from outside. Any other approach will smack of totalitarianism, a creed which is so abhorrent to those who are believers in democratic principles.

I also should like to invite attention to Clause (b) of Article 3 of the Draft Convention under reference. It enjoins upon journalists the duty of facilitating the solution of the economic, social and humanitarian problems of the world as a whole. Does this not, in effect, assign to newspapermen the role which hitherto has been considered the exclusive preserve of statesmen and diplomats? My interpretation finds support from Clause (d) of the Article under reference, which in clear and unambiguous language makes journalists the custodians of international peace and security.

Most journalists in Pakistan are followers of a religion which admonishes the use of sublime language, teaches the value of being least offensive, preaches the gospel of peace and brotherhood among the people of the world. Pakistani journalists will therefore be practising one of the cardinal virtues of their own faith if they live up to the level of the conduct prescribed by the United Nations.

1954:

[From an Address delivered under the auspices of the United Nations programme "Building for Peace".]

The time has come for nations, as well as individuals, to know what they want. If civilized countries *want* peace, they must understand that the problem must be approached basically. The old scaffolding willed to us by past generations cracks on every side. It cannot be consolidated by makeshifts, by bits of string, by pots of glue and treaties gravely signed by Highly-Dignified-Gentlemen. Moreover, consolidation does not suffice. Peace must be established by transforming man from the interior and not by erecting external structures. We have already said it: the source of all wars, the source of all evil, lies in us. No outside protection will be efficient if the enemy cowering at the bottom of our hearts is authorized to live. He will only be annihilated with the help of time, and if we seek him out with the firm intention of reaching him. To attain this result there is only one method. First, to re-establish the cult of historic truth, by feeding the youth of the entire world with the same substance, thus establishing a basis for mutual understanding. This is a preliminary step and it can be taken immediately. Next, to strive to establish the cult of individual human dignity and to improve man by stiffing his archaic instincts. This will be the work of the centuries to come.

LECOMTE DE NOUY.

* * * *

Expectation of the inevitability or imminence of World War III is widespread, with almost everyone taking it for granted that the next holocaust will involve the atomic incineration of many or most of the major cities of men, and will quite possibly leave little but small groups of demented survivors living in savagery amid the ruins.

The most generalized answer to the question of how and why our culture finds itself confronted with such a prospect—and what ought to be done about it—would seem to run somewhat as follows. The Great Society is a congeries of disparate communities, each of which is possessed of "sovereignty" and all of which, therefore, live in "anarchy." Under anarchy, in Thomas Hobbes's immortal phrase, life is "poor, solitary, nasty, brutish, and short." The sole cure for anarchy, we are assured by many voices (including Hobbes's), is government. The remedy for world anarchy is thus widely held to be "world government."

FREDERICK L. SCHUMANN.

THE CHARTER OF UNITED NATIONS

I do not know what is expected of a speaker who has accepted the invitation to inaugurate the Seminar on the "Teaching about the United Nations". The range of possible discussion that suggests itself about the United Nations—its organisational structure, its functional utility, and the inherent weaknesses and draw-backs of its charter—is so vast that one could with justification say almost anything on an occasion like this, without inviting the charge of being irrelevant. Is it expected that, in the Inaugural Address before this Seminar, the speaker should emphasise the importance of publicising the multifarious activities of the United Nations in the fields of international security; and in dealing with international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character; and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms without distinction of race, sex, language or religion? I should imagine that the United Nations Charter contains in a compendious form all the information one needs on its organisation and structure, the authority of its principal organs, and the extent of their jurisdiction. In a bare 111 articles, this Charter summarises the scope of the authority of all the principal organs of the United Nations and states the purposes and principles on which international organisation is based and the conditions under which the States could become members. I think no useful purpose would be served merely by recapitulating the outstanding features of this Charter for the simple reason that any summary that might be attempted of it would, in no sense, be an improvement on the language of the Charter itself. The irreducible minimum obligation

that rests on those who are interested in understanding the role of the United Nations and its place in the international community is to read, nay to chew and digest, the provisions of the Charter itself.

I, therefore, propose to employ the time that is at my disposal in dealing with one or two aspects of the problem which I consider are basic to the satisfactory working of the international organisation that has been created by the Charter; and, if possible, I would like to put forward some suggestions which may be considered by those who are engaged in that most thankless task of advancing the cause of international understanding, amity, peace and goodwill.

Students of international law know that the law of nations is the name for a body of customary and conventional rules which are considered legally binding by civilised States in their dealings with each other. The law of nations is not the law in the sense in which we normally employ that term when we attempt to characterise that body of rules of conduct which are set out and enforced by a sovereign political authority. 'States', that constitute or embody sovereign political authority are themselves the 'persons' recognised by international law and these States do not recognise any extra or supra-statal sovereignty. This is clear from the fact that their sovereignty is absolute and that from the nature of the case, they cannot surrender any part of that authority in favour of any other organisation which may command or compel them to follow a certain course of conduct or to abide by a certain mandate or direction that may be administered in order to promote the purposes that are peculiar to international organisation. The law of nations is really a weaker variety of law in the sense that there is no international government over and above the national ones which could enforce the rules of international law in the same way in which national governments enforce the rules of their domestic law.

The foundation on which is reared the edifice of international law is no other than the *common* consent of the

international community, and by common consent, in this context, we mean "express or tacit consent of such an overwhelming majority of the members of the international order that those who dissent are of no importance whatsoever and disappear totally from the view of one who looks for the will of the community as an *entity* in contradistinction to the wills of its single members. This common consent is a matter of observation and appreciation and not of a logical and mathematical decision". Down the ages, ever since the Romans discovered the body of rules which they called "Jus Gentium", the customary rules of international law have steadily grown and constitute today, for instance, the law which the statute of the International Court of Justice recognises when it says that the principles that the Court shall apply will be (a) international conventions establishing rules expressly recognised by the contesting states, and (b) international custom as evidence of a general practice accepted as law.

It is being increasingly realised that the concept of sovereignty, as it is understood from the point of view of the internal law of the State, namely, as the highest and underived power and as the exclusive competence of a State to determine its own jurisdictional limit, is incompatible with the normal functioning and development of international law and organisation. Unless there is a partial surrender of the sovereignty of States, the process of international legislation, wherewith to secure the rule of law as it may be ascertained and enforced by international tribunals endowed with obligatory jurisdiction, is impossible of fruition.

The paramount necessity of enforcing the rule of international law arises from the desire to avoid threats to the peace and security of nations. Now that distances have been annihilated, and trade and commerce are beginning to acquire an international complexion; now that everything that happens has evident and tangible effects on the domestic and internal affairs of the various States that compose the international family of world nations, people are beginning

to realise the supreme necessity of creating a really effective international organisation to deal satisfactorily with all problems of international import and significance. We should not only be able to tackle the problems on the plane of mere moral persuasion aimed at securing conformity to rules of international conduct, we should also create an international organisation that should have the capacity to enforce those decisions in order that its mandates and directions should have a binding character. This legitimate desire is however impossible of fulfilment in view of the total reluctance on the part of States to surrender themselves at the altar of a law whose sanctions and sources lie outside themselves.

The League of Nations, in the first instance, and subsequently the United Nations, are the two heroic attempts that have been made in the twentieth century to deal with the problem of international organisation. The League of Nations emerged in the wake of the first world war; and the United Nations Charter came out of the second, although its organisation came to be instituted after the cessation of hostilities.

It is necessary to compare the advance that the Charter of the United Nations registers over those provisions relating to the maintenance of international peace that are contained in the Covenant of the League of Nations. Under the Convenant of the League of Nations, not every and any breach of the Covenant brought the application of military and economic sanctions into play *ipso facto*—but it was confined only to resort to war in circumstances which made it obvious that such a war was prohibited under Articles 12, 13 and 15 of the Covenant. It is also useful to remember that the authority determining whether or not any such breach of the articles of the Covenant had taken place was each *individual member of the League of Nations as distinct from the centralised agency or organ of international community such as the Security Council of the United Nations.* Every member of the League of Nations on reaching the conclusion that a violation of the Covenant had taken place was required

under the Covenant to enforce sanctions against the Covenant-breaking State. It should be remembered that there was no obligation to extend the application of military sanctions. Under section 16 of the Covenant all that was provided was that: "it shall be the duty of the Council to *recommend* to the several Governments concerned what effective military, naval or air force, the members of the League shall severally contribute to the armed forces to be used to protect the Covenant of the League". It may be noted that the League of Nations was itself a step forward in the maintenance of international peace in so far as it, for the first time, provided for the operation of the principle of collective enforcement of the law as contra-distinguished from its original characteristics, namely, its preventive or remedial character.

Under the United Nations Charter, however, it is the duty of the Security Council to determine the existence of any threat to peace, breach of peace, or act of aggression, and to make recommendations and decide what measures shall be taken to maintain or restore international peace and security. Such action is not contingent upon a preliminary adjudication by the Security Council that a given State has been guilty of a breach of its obligation not to resort to war, or force, or threats thereof; even an attitude of unfriendliness and lack of accommodation which is adjudged by the Security Council to be inimical to the maintenance of international peace and security from the violation of the international law not amounting to an act of force, is enough. The Security Council has authority to give orders which are binding on all the Member-States. Under articles 46 and 47, we have the Military Staff Committee which is to be the agency through which the will of the Security Council is to operate. It must be remembered that the powers of the Security Council are of a very far-reaching character and, in fact, had it not been for one fatal flaw—the veto power of the permanent members—which vitiates its voting procedure, it is the best type of an

organisation through which the ideal of securing international peace and security could be achieved.

And that brings me to the question of the interpretation of the notorious article of that Charter, *i.e.* article 27, and the criticism of the methods that have been adopted in the development of the theory and practice of the law of the United Nations to circumvent those difficulties by a resort to the conferment of some sort of power on the General Assembly—just to fill in the *lacuna* which is inherent in the structure and the functional utility of the Security Council.

Under article 27 the voting procedure in the Security Council is governed by the following propositions:—

(a) Each member of the Security Council shall have *one* vote and on procedural matters the decisions shall be made by an affirmative vote of the seven members, and

(b) On all other matters the decision will be made by an affirmative vote of seven members *including the concurrent vote of the permanent members*.

The last proposition is subject to the proviso that in the event of one of the members of the Security Council being a party to the dispute the decision whereof falls under Chapter VI of the Charter, the party in question is to refrain from voting.

Several difficulties emerge from the language of article 27: one of them is that there is no hint in the article, or elsewhere in the Charter, how one is to decide what is and what is not a procedural matter. To put it in a concrete way, if the question should arise, whether or not a certain matter is a procedural matter, is that question itself to be decided merely by the affirmative vote of seven members or by the affirmative vote of seven members including the concurrent vote of the permanent members? Interminable debates have ensued on the determination of this question before the Security Council. The representatives of the U.S.S.R have very bluntly stated that, in their opinion, the question whether or not a matter is entirely procedural is not, itself, a procedural question. What lends support to this

view is the last sentence appearing in the statement by the delegations of the four sponsoring governments on voting procedure in the Security Council to which France subsequently adhered, namely: "The decision regarding the preliminary question as to whether or not such a matter is procedural must be taken by a vote of seven members of the Security Council including the concurrent votes of the permanent members". Acceptance of this view necessarily involves a position where the permanent member of the Security Council can say, not only, "I can veto the decision of the Council" but also further say, "I can determine the question which I will veto regardless of the fact whether or not in substance the matter is of a procedural character". In other words, there is no objective or agreed test for the determination of a question being procedural: the arbitrary will of any of the permanent members on this question is conclusive. It is a logical consequence of this view that a permanent member can say on one day that a question is procedural and on the next day that it is not procedural.

The practical working of the Security Council has then this difficulty to reckon with. Any careful student of international affairs would be compelled to reach the conclusion that in view of the provisions of article 27 the working of that organ of the United Nations which primarily deals with problems of peace and security has been completely paralysed and stultified by the veto power of the permanent members.

The original sponsors of the Charter were not unaware of the assumption on which they were grounding their hopes for the proper working of the Charter of the United Nations in relation to the function of the Security Council. In fact, the abnormality of the voting procedure under article 27 is so obvious that it is difficult to assume that they were not aware of the obstacle they were putting in the way of the orderly working of the Security Council. It was the "Big Powers" who were engaged in fighting a war and they were unwilling to surrender themselves

at the altar of an organisation where the insignificant members, by their majority in the Security Council, might be able to dictate terms and conditions as to the maintenance of international order which may be unfavourable to the permanent members. According to Herbert Vere Evatt: "Irresponsible use of the veto in the Security Council has done great harm to the prestige of the United Nations and has forced members to look to the existing powers of the Assembly rather than the Council for the solution of the problems of international peace and security for which the Security Council is primarily responsible."

I would like to state how attempts have been made to deal with the situation arising from the abuse of the power of veto by the Security Council. In 1950, the General Assembly adopted a resolution which, *inter alia*, provided that in the event of the Security Council, failing to exercise its primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace and security due to the lack of unanimity of the permanent members, it was the duty of the General Assembly to consider the matter immediately after it was taken off the agenda of the Security Council with a view to making appropriate recommendations to the members for the collective measures including, in the case of the breach of peace or acts of aggression, the use of armed force, when necessary, to maintain or restore international peace and security. It was provided that in such a contingency, *i.e.* when the Security Council due to the lack of unanimity failed to deal with the question of a threat to peace, the General Assembly may meet in an emergent special session after such a request had been made by the Security Council on the vote of any seven of its members, or by the majority of the members of the United Nations. (Document A/1481).

This resolution of the General Assembly has a little history attached to it, which it becomes necessary to recapitulate in a very summary form in order that the point of the resolution might be more fully appreciated. In June 1950, the Security Council, in order to meet the armed

attack by the North Korean forces, within a few hours of the outbreak of the hostilities announced the attack to be in the nature of a breach of peace and recommended the Member-States to give every assistance to the Republic of Korea. It was possible to pass this resolution because a permanent member of the Security Council, namely, the USSR representative, did not participate in the meeting at which this decision was taken. It is certain that had he been present he would have vetoed the resolution with the result that no further progress could have been made by the Security Council. But when the U.S.S.R representative did put in appearence in subsequent proceedings the situation got completely changed. The resolution adopted by the General Assembly (Doc/1481) which is known as "Uniting for Peace" resolution was supported by 52 Member countries, but was opposed by five members who voted against it, being convinced that it was contrary to law and amounted to abuse of the provisions of the Charter. The fundamental objection to the Resolution which was voiced by Mr. Vyshinsky was that the resolution in substance was a.. attempt to by-pass the Security Council and to avoid the provisions of article 27. Threats to peace will continue if they flow from the unresolved policies of great and strong powers; that is why article 27 requires a unanimity before any question in the nature of an action by the Security Council can be decided upon; for, it is only when such a unanimity is reached that the major threat to world peace can be successfully averted. The veto power was defended on the ground that it was the only weapon in the hands of any one of the permanent members to defend itself against presure politics resulting from an unholy alliance between some of the permanent members and other small powers. The resolution was denounced as being tantamount to a violation of the Charter. It was pointed out that under article 12 of the Charter, while the Security Council is seized of a matter and is exercising its functions in respect of it, the General

Assembly is *prevented* from making any recommendations. The Security Council, being the exclusive organ charged with the duty of maintaining peace and international security, is alone competent to deal with this sphere of action; and no backdoor device or procedural manoeuvres to circumvent this obvious intention of the Charter could therefore be countenanced.

The counter-argument that was adduced on behalf of the United States of America and other nations who sponsored this resolution was, that if potential aggressors are to be deterred and deprived of all hopes of success, a reliable system for collective action had to be designed. Article 10 gave the general Assembly the right to make recommendations to members on any matters within the scope of the present Charter except in relation to disputes or situations with which the Security Council was dealing. If, however, a matter was not on the agenda of the Security Council within the meaning of article 10, the General Assembly was competent to deal with it *post facto* in the event of the Security Council failing to take action due to lack of unanimity amongst the permanent members. It was argued that, although the Security Council had *primary* duty, it had not the *exclusive* responsibility to take measures against aggression as articles 10, 11 and 12 seemed to vest a secondary or residual responsibility on the Assembly not to mention the fact that Member-States always had the right of individual and collective self-defence expressly recognised by article 51.

It is my considered opinion that the above mentioned resolution of the General Assembly is *ultra vires* of the provisions of the Charter and should not have been passed by the General Assembly. The proper way to reach the objectives of the Charter is to amend article 27 of the Charter and design a different voting procedure and thus avoid making unanimity of the five permanent members a condition precedent for the exercise of powers reserved to the Security Council under the Charter. This amendment itself is possible only if the five permanent members agree

thereto, to say nothing of the other additional requirements postulated by article 108.

The reason why I consider the resolution 'Uniting for Peace' of the General Assembly to be contrary to the provisions of the Charter may now be briefly stated. Having regard to the scheme of the Charter, a special organ has been entrusted under Chapter V with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. There is no indication that this organ of the United Nations is in any manner subservient to the authority, superintendence and control of the General Assembly although, under article, 15, the General Assembly is charged with the duty of receiving and considering annual and special reports from the Security Council, even as it does in respect of similar reports from other organs of the United Nations. Under article 12 while the Security Council is exercising in respect of any dispute or situation the functions assigned to it under the Charter, the General Assembly shall not make any recommendations with regard to that dispute or situation unless the Security Council so requests. Having regard to the language employed in this article, as also in several other articles touching and concerning the jurisdiction and authority of the General Assembly, it is perfectly plain that the matter of securing peace and security is within the exclusive competence of the Security Council. The very fact that a special voting procedure has been prescribed in article 27 to eliminate the possibility of any action being initiated where the five permanent representatives do not concur on non-procedural questions, shows that nothing in the nature of the award of that relief can be granted by resort to the authority of the General Assembly itself, as has been attempted in the resolution under criticism. The argument that the Security Council has the primary responsibility and, therefore, there is a residuum of responsibility vested in the General Assembly in cases where the Security Council is not seized of the matter, is legally untenable. The well-known doctrine of law, that what cannot

be done directly cannot be suffered to be done indirectly, operates in the present case. The General Assembly is charged with the duty under article 11 of merely considering the general principles of cooperation for the maintenance of international peace and security. It may even discuss any questions relating to the maintenance of international peace and security brought before it by any member of the United Nations, or even by the Security Council, or even by a State which is not a member of the United Nations (in accordance with article 35) and subject to the over-riding provisions in article 12 may make recommendations in regard to any such question to the State or States. But any such question on which *action* is necessary can only be referred by it to the Security Council either before or after the discussion. From this it follows that where a matter has been dealt with by the Security Council and under article 27 has been vetoed, there is no authority left with the General Assembly to do anything about it in the way of initiating an action of the sort which could be taken by the Security Council. It is my opinion that the General Assembly cannot *even make recommendations* because the authority to make recommendation is burdened by the over-riding considerations contained in article 12. If the Security Council has been seized of the matter and has decided to take no action with respect to it, *it has indirectly declared that no action even in the nature of recommendations is called for, for if the Security Council wanted any recommendations to be made by the General Assembly it could have done so under article* 12. I am afraid this consideration has never been sufficiently appreciated by those who have supported this Resolution in the General Assembly. In substance, the point I am making is that the capacity and authority to make recommendation is available provided a matter has never been seized of by th Security Council. But if it has been seized and vetoed, it necessarily follows that no recommendation can be made by the General Assembly with respect to it, for such a recommendation

could have been asked for even by the Security Council. The combined operation of articles 12 and 11 rob the General Assembly of its power to make recommendations of the sort which, having regard to the resolution under criticism, it is claimed that it has the competence to do.

The initial sponsors of the Charter became party to it primarily because there is, underlying the whole of the Charter, a clear-cut guarantee that no action either by the General Assembly or by the Security Council in relation to the maintenance of peace and security was conceivable, until and unless, there was agreement among the 5 permanent members of the Security Council in respect of the proposed action or recommendation. It is, to say the least, unconstitutional and improper that the provisions of the Charter should be unduly stretched to cover a species of action which the language of the Charter clearly forbids us from conceding to the General Assembly.

It is necessary to remind ourselves that the Permanent Powers could not have very well placed themselves in the position of allowing any seven members of the Security Council, out of the eleven, to create a situation in which they would be called upon to surrender to any orders or mandates which the authority of the Security Council under the Charter enable them to issue. It is equally true that if the position had been made perfectly plain at the time when the original sponsors of the Charter were engaged in designing a method of securing international peace and cooperation, there would have been no such thing as the United Nations. The climate of the international opinion that surrounded the Big Powers when they were war-weary, led everyone to expect that there would be an agreement between them over the means of preventing war and that, so it was felt, the great Powers could be counted upon to work together in the cause of international peace. Subsequent events have shown how unduly optimistic, if not groundless, that expectation was. The world-situation has deteriorated since the Charter was signed, and the acrimonious wrangles

round the Security Council table have created enough noise in the world for even the most buoyant apologist of the United Nations to realise the utter impracticability, if not the futility, of the United Nations.

It is my considered opinion that the United Nations, by reason of its peculiar constitution and procedure, is prevented from making that measure of contribution towards the solution of the problems that arise out of international tensions and conflicts which the protagonists of its ideology and functional utility would have us accept. Commenting on this aspect of the case, Donald McLachlan, Assistant Editor of the *Economist*, writing under "The Death of Diplomacy" in the March 1951 issue of the *Twentieth Century* says: "Subconsciously there is, perhaps, a feeling growing that sensible people do not do business this way" (*i.e.* the way in which the United Nations function) they do not negotiate, quarrel, threaten and climb down in public; rather do they seek compromise and accommodation in private". In amplification he proceeds to say:

"One might even make so bold as to say that there is a body of opinion growing up, on the Right as well as the Left, in Europe and the United States as well as in this country (*i.e.* England), that is waiting only for some one brave and clear-headed enough to put its fears, suspicions and dislikes into clear words. That opinion, time may prove, is against the working of the United Nations in its present form and for a return to diplomacy. Whether that opinion is prepared to accept any statement as bald as this is doubtful; what is certain is that very few people with any knowledge of international affairs retain faith in the United Nations' ability to perform the two main functions of a national foreign policy—namely, to secure vital interests and to provide for peaceful change. What is more, inquiry would probably show that there are many who have run the whole gamut of disillusionment. They rejected 'power politics' and secret diplomacy in the 'twenties because Wilson rejected them in 1918. They turned to the League of Nations in

the 'thirties only to find that its members would not face the risks of organizing collective resistance to Italian and Japanese aggression. They turned to the United Nations in the 'forties only to find, in the Korean affair, that collective resistance to aggression is a difficult, dangerous business in which national interests may directly conflict with those of a world organization. Slowly it is dawning on them that the state of relationships in the world and the behaviour of certain states matter more than the organization that idealism tries to impose on them."

Anyone who has had the slightest knowledge and experience of the actual working of the United Nations will not have failed to notice that the two main Power Blocs that are primarily responsible for the existence of international tension, *i.e.* the Anglo-American and the Soviet Bloc, while they are engaged in conducting deliberations on any question that presents itself for solution in any organ of the United Nations, speak practically the *same language but mean to convey impressions widely different from each other.* Each side employs an identical vocabulary in order to set forth widely contrasted meanings. When the representatives of the Anglo-American Bloc and the Allied Powers press for the claims of "freedom" and "liberty" of the individual to express himself in the way he may like and negatively suggest non-intervention on the part of the State Governments in regard to the enjoyment of that right on the part of the individual, the representatives of the Soviet Bloc also use the same expression but employ it to convey a radically different meaning: for them freedom means freedom from economic bondage, freedom from being exploited by the Bourgousie class or its agents, the capitalist Governments of the world. "The job of the Soviet Diplomat while he employs this language is simply to accelerate the historic process of capitalist disintegration by supporting revolutionary forces in foreign countries. For him such traditional methods as persuation, negotiation and the threat of force are, in the long run, unimportant save perhaps in matters of

trade. Any negotiation that has to be done can be done in public where the best propaganda effects can be obtained". Now, language, such as it is, is the only instrument that the human mind has evolved for the purpose of communicating its meaning. If in the international world a situation is reached where identical terminology is employed to convey divergent meanings, the only use for which human language was designed ceases to operate with the result that basic attitudes of parties to the dispute remain unresolved, although each claims to be loyal to the well-accepted ideals and values of the modern world.

This then is the answer to the view expressed by Hans Kelsen in *Recent Trends in the Law of the United Nations*—"The author, however, is fully aware of the fact that the law of a community—national or international—and especially its constitution or constituent treaty, *may be changed not only by formal amendments carried out in accordance with the procedure laid down for this purpose in the law itself. It may be modified also by its actual application based on an interpretation which, more or less consistent with the letter of the law, is not in conformity with the ascertainable intention of its authors.*" This eminent authority, the way I read him, virtually agrees with the view that I have taken of the utter unconstitutionality of the resolution "Uniting for Peace" of the General Assembly, but proceeded to defend it by saying that it is only by resort to such an unconstitutional procedure that the cause of international cooperation could at all be advanced. In his judgment, since the amending procedure enjoined by the Charter of the United Nations under article 108 is impossible of compliance, as it postulates concurrent vote of five permanent members, it is permissible that an interpretation be imposed on the provisions of the United Nations Charter which may be consistent with the letter but which may not be in conformity with the ascertainable intention of its authors. This is the most dangerous doctrine ever propounded by any jurist that I know of. It, in substance, allows us, in the matter of the interpretation of a legal instrument,

to read more into the words employed therein than is consistent with the ascertainable intention of the authors thereof. This learned author proceeds to say "In the main work the author has frequently emphasized that the principle *ex injuria jus non oritur*—law cannot originate in an illegal act—has important *exceptions.* There are certainly cases where a new law originates in the violation of an old law. If and in so far as the organisation of collective self-defence through the North Atlantic Treaty, the action in Korea, the re-appointment of the Secretary-General, and the resolution "Uniting for Peace" are inconsistent with the old law of the United Nations, they, perhaps, constitute one of these cases of which we may say *ex injuria jus oritur.*"

It is dangerous in the extreme to permit this type of preposterous procedure to prevail in the matter of construing the language of the Charter. One must denounce it as a vain attempt to circumvent the difficulties of the amending procedure under article 108 of the Charter. You cannot in the name of interpretation of a legal instrument substantially depart from the intendment of its provisions. How can you expect the cause of international co-operation to advance if these indefensible methods of procedure in relation to the interpretation of the Charter of the United Nations are to be countenanced? You cannot by violating the provisions of the Charter advance the principles and purposes which underlie the very institution of United Nations.

What then is the remedy? The answer to this question is not difficult to discover, although I admit, it requires a great deal of courage to utter and support it. We must frankly admit that unless we amend the Charter of the United Nations, we cannot make much headway in the matter of advancing the cause of international cooperation. A frank admission of this type has at least one virtue to recommend it—the virtue of truthfulness. Instead of discovering methods of by-passing the provisions of the Charter, it is much the best course to admit the obstacles that

now lie before the nations of the world and then to plead and agitate either for their removal or for the creation of a new basis on which international law and international cooperation can be grounded. Unless the nations are persuaded to surrender the dogma of absolute sovereignty and submit themselves to a well-defined extra-statal or supra-national authority, the problems that are facing mankind today cannot effectively be solved. It is much the best course that those who are convinced of the cause of international peace and cooperation should uncompromisingly plead for the creation of a well-defined international authority that may have a *de facto* jurisdiction and control over the member nations. They should never be a party to sponsoring indefensible methods of passing Resolutions and articulating decisions which are plainly opposed to this Charter of the United Nations. Here as elsewhere truth alone will make us free.

I would like to conclude my talk by stressing what I believe to be essential: 'majority' to my way of thinking, consists of one honest man's views plus his courage. Time alone is needed for the triumph of the truth. Those who attempt to advance august and idealistic ends by resorting to perfidious and indefensible means ought to know that along that line of development lies not success but failure. How can you serve 'Truth' by resort to lies and falsehoods. Humanity must learn to worship the God of truth and Righteousness in utter disregard of any consequences which this may entail.

We must adhere to the purposes and principles of the United Nations; and pin our faith on the ultimate triumph of the conscience of humanity, and do all we can to see that the cause of international peace and security is promoted. At present the only justification for our loyalty and devotion to the United Nations is that, in the total absence of this institution, we have nothing else for the purpose of resolving those discords and tensions which seem to threaten the cause of world peace and security.

(1953 From an inaugural address.)

The veil between God and His servant is neither earth nor Heaven, nor the throne nor the footstool; thy selfhood and illusions are the veil and when thou removest these thou hast attained unto God.

ABU SAYED KHAIRUL KABIR.

Say: Surely all my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for God, the Lord of the world.

No associate hath He; and this I am commanded and I am the first of those who submit.

AL-QURAN, CHAP. VI, vv. 162-4.

The two great characteristics of Sufi thought, namely a belief in the unity, through effort, of the human soul with God and the transitoriness of temporal things, which are a veil hiding the true nature of illumination from the comprehension of man are evident in all Shah Abdul Latif's Poetry. Like the great poets of Persia he employs a variety of images to bring out this essential lesson.

H. T. SORLEY.

The veil between God and His servant is neither earth nor Heaven, nor the throne nor the footstool : thy selfhood and illusions are the veil and when thou removest these thou hast attained unto God.

ABU SAYED KHAIRUL KABIR.

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Say : Surely all my prayer and my sacrifice and my life and my death are (all) for God, the Lord of the world.

No associate hath He; and this I am commanded and I am the first of those who submit.

AL-QURAN, CHAP. VI. vs. 163-4.

* * * *

The two great characteristics of Sufi thought, namely a belief in the unity, through effort, of the human soul with God and the transitoriness of temporal things, which are a veil hiding the true nature of illumination from the comprehension of man are evident in all Shah Abdul Latif's Poetry. Like the great poets of Persia he employs a variety of images to bring out this essential lesson.

H. T. SORLEY.

POETRY OF SHAH ABDUL LATIF

In talking to you tonight about the poetry of Shah Abdul Latif and his message, I am not, I assure you, assuming the role of a critical scholar. Mine, I believe, is a humbler role; and it is as well that you should know that I shall speak of Latif as an admirer of his poetry and comment on the value of his mission purely from a personal standpoint. It is impossible for me to be a detached spectator of the historic mission of this poet of our Province and offer you what might be called an objective estimate of his poetry. So much of his thought and its expression surrounds the life of an average Sindhi that it is impossible for him to avoid being deeply influenced by it; and, so far as I am concerned, his poetry appears to have gone in me with my mother's milk. Whenever anyone sings a simple *Kafi* from Shah Sahib's poetry, he provides for me a sort of aesthetic delight which I do not experience even when I listen to the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven. All that Latif has said in his poetry has become a part of my life, and it is not possible, therefore, to expect that I could be objective in my appraisal of his message. Frankly, then, mine is the viewpoint of a lover of Latif's poetry and it is as well that you should know this before you can sympathetically enter into the spirit of what I am going to say to you about him tonight.

The main characteristic of Latif's poetry, to my way of thought, is that it is a remarkable record of a God-intoxicated man's longing to rise above his level of life in order to meet his Maker. Latif is essentially a poet of love and longing. He has sung as nobody I know of has sung, either before or after him, of man's longing to respond to the call of universal life. He is never weary of emphasising the need of obeying this call. Nobody has portrayed

so effectively as he has the experience of a man of devotion who is in search of God. Not a line of his poetry but reflects his testimony that the primary purpose of our life here is to acknowledge the truth of the words of the Holy Quran: "We are from God and to Him is our return."

In one of his *Surs* entitled "Marui and Omar" he has presented to us what might be described as the autobiography of the spirit. There is nothing, in sheer beauty and sublimity of poetical expression, or for depth of insight in matters spiritual, comparable with "Marui and Omar" anywhere in the whole range of world-poetry. Latif, like Shakespeare and Goethe, takes up ordinary tales that were known to the people of his day and renders them in glorious verse and employs them as parables for the purpose of revealing the hidden side of life's beauty and power.

How this remarkable man succeeded in accomplishing all this, is a question I have often asked of myself, but I must confess that I have not, as yet, found a satisfactory answer to it. That such a man should have emerged in the eighteenth century life of Sind is, by itself, a remarkable fact indeed. He has not only articulated the deepest aspirations and intuitions of the soul of Sind but has successfully become the mouthpiece of its destiny. Neither in the Sindhi language of his day, nor in the cultural formations which constituted his mental environment, was there anything so favourable as to have brought about the growth of a poet of his eminance. He speaks from heights hitherto unscaled by the mere mortals, and if he owes a debt to any book or man it is only to the Quran and to Muhammad (God's peace be on him); for verily, more than anything else, he is the commentator of all that the Quran teaches or Islam stands for. At numerous places in his *Rasalo* you would come by lines from the Holy Quran wonderfully dove-tailed as integral parts of the poet's verses: and what is more, you will find that the lines that he quotes from the Quran in the context of his verses begin

to glow with a meaning and significance one could have hardly sensed before.

It must clearly be understood that Latif is not a poet in the conventional sense of that term: he never *wrote* poetry. His method of expression was more direct. All that one discovers in his *Rasalo* was sung by him to the accompaniment of musical instruments, and often enough in the presence of his devoted disciples and those distant admirers of his who used to collect at *Bhit* from diverse parts of Sind just to listen to his song—to be inspired and uplifted by it.

The question has often been debated how far such poetry, as is believed to have fallen from his lips, could be regarded as an authentic record of what the poet himself uttered or, may be taken, even roughly, to represent what he had himself felt and found. For, in accordance with the practice of the day, when he would sit surrounded by a band of disciples to sing songs of devotion, there would be his coadjutors who would also join in the chorus occasionally; and sometimes, they would even take the initiative of adding a verse or so, in order to add to the richness of the thought of what the master was attempting to convey.

The biographers of the poet are generally agreed that he lived from 1690 to 1751; although the historic evidence bearing on this question of dates is not beyond challenge. According to H. T. Sorley, the famous author of *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit*, "the poet as a young man must have seen the *Kalhora* dynasty rise to power, and his death seems to have coincided with the establishment of the Second East India Company's Factory at Thatta." These dates and events are relevant in so far as the question of the authenticity of his verses is concerned, because the first text, and that too in an incomplete form, was published by Ernest Trumpp in Leipzig only in about 1866, that is, roughly 115 years after the death of the poet.

I will not, therefore, indulge in, what I consider is after all, a profitless pursuit of having to determine by an appeal

to those well-known 'extrinsic' and 'intrinsic' tests that have been formulated by the biographers of the poet, what portions, if any, out of the total output of the poetical work attributed to him, are really authentic. Suffice it to say that there have been versifiers who, whatever be their motive or justification, were admittedly guilty of adulterating the text of his poetry.

What is, however, from my point of view essential at the present moment is to make an effort to penetrate deep down into the meaning and significance of some of the poet's verses in order that some idea of the richness and depth of his poetry is conveyed to my listeners.

To begin with, as I have hinted a little earlier, Latif himself regarded his poetry as being in some sense an interpretation of the message of the Prophet Muhammad (on whom be peace), the message that has been conveyed to and preserved for us in the Holy Quran. 'Whatever verses I have sung', says he, 'are but *Ayats*'—*Ayats* in precisely the sense in which we use the term in relation to the text of the Quran—for these verses have the tendency in them of directing the soul of man to that 'region where the Beloved abides'. As the readers of Shah's *Rasalo* know, his poetry is full of quotations in Arabic from the Holy Quran and these have been inwoven and inwrought as parts of the poetical Sindhi text itself. For instance, the *Sur* of "Marui and Omar" begins with the query and an answer to that query—in Arabic from the Quran—

> "Am I not your Lord ?" and the answer was,
> "Indeed Thou art so."

A considerable bulk of the poetry of Shah is taken up with the praise of the Almighty Lord, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. Take the well-known verse* with which the *Rasalo* of Shah begins :—

> In the beginning Allah is,
> Who knoweth All, who sits aloft,
> The Lord of all the World that be.

* Translated by H. T. Sorley *cf.* his Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit. p,312.

He is the Mighty, Old of Days,
Of His Own Power Established.
He is the Lord, One, Only One,
Sustainer and Compassionate.
Sing ye the praise of HimWho Heals,
The True One, sing ye praise of Him,
He is the One, Who Hath No Peer.
Confess ye this. In heart of heart
Acknowledge ye the Praised One, who
The Causer of the Causes is.
Why go ye then and bow yourselves
In front of others, why go ye?
Men were who said: 'He is the One,
Without a Peer', in heart of heart
Acknowledging the Praised One, who
The Causer of the Causes is.
Such men did from the righteous path
Set not an erring foot astray.
Men are whom God the One hath cut out,
Whose bodies He hath cut in Twain.
Who, having seen the severed parts,
Doth not for self, unfortunate,
Desire like theirs the severance?
God who is One, no rival hath.
Herein of Him the Oneness is,
And Righteousness of Truth. But who
Embraced false Two-ness lost indeed
The savour and the salt of life.

The unity of God, His unrivalled greatness and power are a never-ending refrain of all his poetry.

Much of his poetry, however, is allegorical. He takes up, as I have said, ordinary stories that were current in his day, stories about the love affairs of peasants and rustics, like *Sohni-Mehiwal*', '*Omar Marui*', '*Sassi Punnu*' and '*Leela Chanesar*', and uses the characters and main details in those stories as mere symbols and expresses through them, allegorically, those deeper mystical aspects of the spiritual

life of Man which constitute the essential part of all higher poetry, perennial philosophy and universal religion.

Take, for instance, his treatment of the tale of 'Omar and Marui': we have here a simple tale totally transformed, in the hands of the poet, into a 'symbol'. He employs it merely as a means for setting forth that message of hope and promise for that reunion of Man with God of which the Holy Book speaks when it says :—

"O'Verily the man is skirting a difficult path to his Maker
But he will meet Him".

Marui was a graceful girl born of humble 'Goat-herds' of Malir. They were simple folk who lived by tending goats; living on the herbs, roots and fruits that the country-side yielded. This girl was betrothed to *Khet*, her kinsman.

This infuriates *Phog* who has been, pressing his suit for the hand of this beautiful girl. Disappointed in love, he informs Omar, the chieftain of the place, about the beauty of this girl. He praises her beauty so much that Omar becomes curious to see this rustic girl to decide for himself whether or not she really deserves the praise that is being showered on her by *Phog*.

Prince Omar, accompanied by *Phog*, goes *incognito* to Malir, the home of Marui. He sees this girl by the well where she had gone, as was the custom of the day, to fill jars of water. Having seen her, he falls in love with her. He approaches her and pretends that he is dying of thirst and while she proceeds to give him water to drink, he forcibly takes her on camel back to his palace in Omarkot.

Thus was Marui abducted from her people. Omar does his best to persuade her to marry him, but she refuses. He offers her all the comfort, happiness and prosperity which life in a kingly palace could promise, but she denounces all these temptations as corrupt inducements and declares her loyalty and devotion to her own people and asks Omar to restore her to them. It is said that Omar pressed his claim on her for over six years but Marui was so steadfast in her refusal that, at long last, Omar released her and

allowed her to go back to her own people.

This simple story of an ordinary rustic girl from Sind is used as a symbol by Latif for the communication of some of the basic truths about the life of man as he lives it here on earth. Marui represents the spirit or the soul; Omar the earthly self; Malir symbolises that 'eternal nowhere' towards which we are, in this earthly life, all moving as "weary but hopeful pilgrims".

The palace of Omar represents the comforts, the conveniences, the joys and prosperity of earthly life which is, according to the teachings of our mystics and sages, after all, a prison-house for the spirit that must perennially yearn and long for its release from bondage in order that it should enjoy reunion with that source of life whence it emerged. Marui, living in the *Kote* of Omar, had to reject all that earthly pleasures and comforts could offer: she had to live a life of longing and hope in order that she might secure her return to her people and thus enjoy real and lasting happiness. According to the teaching of Islam, 'Everything returns to its source', and the belief is that when one lives a life of continual purity and longing, one qualifies oneself for being restorated to that source of universal life whence one came. The pilgrim's progress is really a home-coming of the spirit, the return of the prodigal son. And that is the 'primeval contract' entered into by the soul of man with its Maker and that is why Mussalmans are enjoined to believe and say 'Indeed, we are from Him and to Him is our return'.

It is impossible to convey within the scope of a mere argument how Latif has woven into this simple story the pattern of that spiritual relationship which, according to the sages, obtains between man and God. In fact, in all the verses of this *Sur* there is no attempt at all at narration of the events connected with this story: for instance, the circumstances and the manner in which Marui had been forcibly taken away from her people to the palace of Omar and how she had to be restored back to her people by Omar himself are not adverted to in any detail in the poem. Latif assumes

that the hearer knows the story and, in fact, he would have been completely indifferent even if he had been convinced that his listeners did not know the details of the story. He uses the tale as an allegory, pure and simple, and each one of his verses is so very self-contained that no external reference is at all necessary for the comprehension of the meaning that is enshrined in them.

I will take up only one idea out of the numerous that are to be found in those verses that have been subsumed by the later commentators of Latif's poetry under the heading 'Omar and Marui', just to illustrate the depth of philosophical insight that inspires his utterances.

The outstanding question which has engaged the attention of philosophers and mystics down the ages is to explain the purpose of Creation and to answer the question: why is it necessary that the *soul of man be made to undergo all those experiences which its career on this planet necessarily entails?* If 'we are from Him and to Him is our return,' why is it necessary for the intervening process of separation to take place? What purpose is to be served as a result of this temporary disunion'? Marui, on her return from the *Kote* of Omar, raises this very question herself. Why was it at all necessary, she begins to muse, for Destiny to have brought about her separation from her people? Why was it at all necessary that she had to undergo that period of strain and suffering and suffer from that feeling of loneliness that haunted her when she lived her days in the *Kote* of Omar? Why, for all those long years, had she to be kept away from her own people and, in particular, from Khet to whom she was betrothed and to whom she rightly belonged?

In one of the most remarkable passages in the poetry of Latif, one comes across the following lines in which the poet raises not only this question but also indicates the answer. Marui is made to say :—

"How auspicious were the days that I spent in bondage;
How often did I not weep away my time the while I

stood over the roof of the *Kote* of Omar ;
Was I not broken to pieces the while I was longing for the Union?
It is, thanks to the chains of the bondage and my longing to be free that I am so pure today."

The poet's teaching is that this life is an opportunity given to man to cleanse himself—to purify himself. It may be recalled that, according to the Quran, the Prophet was also sent down to *purify* men, to teach them their destiny and philosophy. The process of purification, according to Latif, consists in asserting our moral independence by denouncing all that is calculated to keep us away from that straight path which takes us to our goal.

This peasant girl in the palace of the king finds herself surrounded by all kinds of temptations. Here was a prince at her feet, prepared to offer everything that his kingly authority could summon, if only she was prepared to surrender her person to him. But she, who felt that she belonged to another, and had, therefore, no right to surrender her person to this king, had to keep herself pure by constantly reminding herself of the place she came from and to which she was destined to go. During the days of her wrongful confinement in the *Kote* of Omar it became a daily habit with her to go up on the roof of the palace and from there to gaze with tear-bedewed eyes in the direction in which her hamlet was. This meant a great deal of relief to her : it comforted her to believe that one day assuredly she would meet her people.

This duty of constantly reminding oneself of one's ultimate destination is prayer. The prayer not only prevents you from trafficking into an immoral and evil course of conduct, but it also strengthens your moral fibre and helps you to reach a higher level of life. It is the same in Nature too. The mother-shell that lies on the ever-heaving breast of the ocean refuses to take even one drop of sea water that lies below it although it be thirsty; instead, it looks upwards to Heavens and lo! when the rain falls and a drop is

caught in her womb, a pearl is born. Man in the world is thus required to imitate the life of the mother-shell. Living in the world he has yet to be out of it. This thought, at another place, has been put by Latif in those immortal lines of his:—

Moonkhe moon pryan budhi widho barmen
Henay mathan piya chawan matan pand pusaeen

which translated would run much the way would the lines from Hafiz*

Dar myani Qaar-e-darya takht banda kardai
Baz me goee ki daman tar makun hushyar bash.

Latif, similarly in his *Sur* called '*Leela Chanesar*', has offered to us what may be regarded as his interpretation of human history. This has reference to the tale of Chanesar a king of Sind in the thirteenth century. He had been married to a girl called Leela, and both of them lived a happy married life. Chanesar, for his part, was always prepared to do anything he could in order to keep the Queen happy. In the palace, however, was a courtesan girl, Kunro by name, who wanted to bring about a discord in his married life. Kunro at first openly asked the Queen to allow her to spend at least one night with the king, but on this being refused, she designed another method of realising her ambition. She had a beautiful and costly necklace with which, in the presence of the Queen, she began to play with such a simulated innocence that she gave an impression as though what she was playing with was just no more than a toy of ordinary value. The Queen asked for the necklace, but Kunro showed reluctance to part with it. Ultimately, as a result of repeated entreaties from the Queen, Kunro agreed to part with the necklace provided the Queen would allow her, as a price for it, to spend one night with Chanesar. The Queen thought that here was a golden opportunity to get the precious necklace and, after all, the price she had been asked to pay was not much—only to part company with her husband for just one night. This

* Note: Some say that these lines are from Jalaludin Rumi.

appeared to her to be not a such bad bargain afterall.

In the bridal chamber on the following night, Chanesar discovered not his wife but this girl Kunro, and on coming to know that the Queen had sold him for just "a mess of pottage", he grew indignant and banished her from the palace. The Queen was thus driven out and rendered homeless. She wandered like a beggar-maid, all the time recalling for herself what a happy state of life she had surrendered for "the touch of a mere necklace"—a thing that did not after all matter much, considering that she could have had several such necklaces for the mere asking. She began to realise that, after all, it was just for the love of something which had only an apparent value that she had been banished from the palace of her husband.

In this story Latif breathes a transcendental significance. Chanesar symbolises the Heavenly Power from whom descends the gift of grace and dignity and the Queen represents the individual who for the mere love of earthly splendour is prepared to reject a Heavenly reward. As long as the individual believes in the authority of the Higher Power and is prepared to serve it exclusively by belonging to it, he is immune from all attacks and becomes the recipient not only of God's grace but also of earthly possessions and power. But once he renounces his loyalty to that heavenly power by electing to choose the cheap earthly possessions in preference to doing his duty to God—such is the law that he is forthwith rejected and ostracised. Such a person not only forfeits his claim to God's Grace but is also denied such earthly authority as he might have otherwise wielded. It is in respect of such a person's fall that it has been said: "Greater is the fall of those that fall from Heaven". As in the life of the individual, so in the life of Nation; the Nations that serve the moral order and are prepared to dedicate themselves to the realisation of the Higher purposes, survive, and to them is assigned not only a place of honour in the scheme of things, but they also become wielders of worldly authority. Such has been, for

instance, the history of Mussalmans! They, as long as they lived only for God and for doing His Will, were able, as Carlyle says somewhere, in a bare eighteen years time to transform the world. "From Granada to Delhi", says he, "the world was in flames". They lived for Him and for His glory, and they succeeded in establishing God's authority wherever they went.

But, soon, the love of earthly possessions began to take possession of their soul and they forsook their God and then—like the Queen in the story—they were rejected, with the result that the heights they attained is now a matter of mere historical memory. The Moslems keep on wondering why they have been rejected, and they do not seem to appreciate how is it that they have brought themselves to their present state of degradation.

I wish I had the time to translate for you some of those soul-stirring verses in Latif's poetry which reflect his views on this problem, but I will be content to conclude my talk with the very thought with which Latif concludes the present *Sur*.

And that thought is: Now that the Queen has been driven out of her home, has been rejected, what is the way out? How is this Queen to regain her original status and get herself admitted in Chanesar's presence? How, in other words, is a people or a nation to get back to its position of original power and authority? The answer according to Latif is: By returning to God, by doing *Tobah*, by admitting the fact that we have gone wrong, and by continually praying and imploring for His forgiveness.

Latif always ends on the note of hope. He reiterates the words of the Holy Quran, "Do not despair of the Mercy of God, for God is forgiving." We ought not, all the same, he warns, feel conceited and indulge in some manner of self-justification and deceive ourselves into believing that the Higher Power has wronged us. We should, on the other hand, freely acknowledge our guilt,the folly of our having abandoned our loyalty to the Higher Power, and repeatedly

ask for forgiveness. For in the end, let us not forget, God loves man whom He has created in His own image. And the moment a man strives to return to His Maker earnestly and with due diligence, the doors of mercy are always open for him.

That is then Latif's advice to Leela: the admonition has been cast in a verse which has become immortal in Sindhi literature:—

Jay leela-ay na laheen ta pun leela'-age
A sro ma lahage bhajh Bhajhari ghani

"That if you do not get near Him by entreating
You must not despair but go on entreating
Do not give up hope—for God is ever merciful and forgiving."

It is the humble and the earnest few, through whom God's purposes will come to prevail. Here is, in the poetry of this humble servant of God, a mine of wisdom, a store house of inspiration and I venture to suggest to my listeners that its continual study will disclose to them those words of wisdom for which there is no parallel anywhere in the World-literature.

I would like to conclude this talks by quoting those memorable lines of Hafiz in order to offer my homage to this Poet of my heart:

Saqya Sharmindah am zi lutf bey payam-e-tu
Tu mara pur medehi man baz khali me diham.

O'Cup bearer—I am over whelmed by your boundless Grace
Lo! you serve me with a cup that is full and I return an empty one instead.

[A Radio Pakistan Broadcast, on Wednesday, October 23, 1954.]

The Truman Administration, having preached holy war against Communism for years with political and economic results highly advantageous to the possessors of political power and industrial securities, welcomed an opportunity to vindicate its anti-Communism and to capitalize further upon Congressional and public ardor for crusading against Red Sin. A rational definition of national interest (in the judgment of this writer) would have dictated unilateral American military intervention in Korea against Communist aggression, with no extension of the conflict to China and with no attempt to make the U.N. a tool of American purposes. The course adopted was one of combining defence of South Korea with an open challenge to Red China and the mobilization of the U.N. in support of American policy—with the sequel fatal alike to the U.N. and to the Korean enterprise as both were originally conceived.

FREDERICK L. SCHUMAN.

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No good and nothing but harm can come of using the Security Council and the Assembly as an arena of the great dispute, or of acting as if we did not realize the inherent limitations of the Charter and thought that somehow we could by mere force and awkwardness use the U.N.O. to overawe and compel the Russians. All that can come of that is to discredit the United Nations on issues it cannot settle and thus to foreclose the future of the U.N., which can begin only if and when these issues have been settled. Judging by the speeches in the Greek affair of the British and American delegates, Sir Alexander Cadogan and Mr. Herschel Johnson appear to be acting on instructions which treat the U.N. as expendable in our conflict with Russia. It is a great pity. Nothing is being accomplished to win the conflict, to assuage it, or to settle it. But the U.N., which should be preserved as the last best hope of mankind that the conflict can be settled and a peace achieved, is being chewed up. . . It is implicit in the policy (of the Truman Administration) that the U.N. has no future as a universal society, and that either the U.N. will be cast aside like the League of Nations, or it will be transformed into an anti-Soviet coalition. In either event the U.N. will have been destroyed.

WALTER LIPPMANN.

COMMUNISM AND THE KOREAN QUESTION

The affairs in Korea, the moves and countermoves around the 38th, or what has been more aptly termed "the deadly parallel", have acquired in the judgment of serious students of current affairs an awful significance. The question has been approached and discussed from several points of view. There are some prophets of political opinion who have considered the Korean question from the view-point of the United Nations and have asserted that some progress towards the setting up of an international world order has been made in as much as the forces of the United Nations are now fighting under a common flag against North Korean aggression in Korea. There are others, however, who regard the very intervention by the United Nations in Korea as an unjustifiable adventure, an unnecessary and uncalled for move to settle a question which Koreans themselves are competent to settle. There are some again, who look at the problem raised by hostilities in Korea in the context of world events since 1917, and see in what has occurred, the ideological, diplomatic and strategic triumph of theCommunists' Way of Life.

Thus the answer to the Korean question depends ultimately on the way it is posed, for, just as in the physical, so also in the ideological world, perception of reality, to a considerable extent, is conditioned by the perspective from which it is regarded. What one sees is ultimately dependent as much upon the location of the percipient subject as on the medium through which one looks. External reality is after all but a mere projection of our inner being: as in optics, so also in politics, perception is controlled to a great extent by the nature of the refracting medium through which one sees.

But if I have taken up the pen at all to deal with the Korean question, I have done so merely in an attempt to prepare a ground for the consideration of this most momentous international question with a view to formulating our foreign policy. To those of us who are deeply concerned with world events that directly effect our infant State and its prestige, it is of the utmost importance to look at the problem from what might be termed the Pakistani perspective.

The Korean affair has raised a number of controversial issues but the consensus of opinion among thinkers whose judgment can be depended upon is that it is symptomatic of Russian designs on South-East Asia and the Far East. Considering that in this world of ours there are no longer such things as geographical barriers obstructing the march of aggressive armies it is worth while for us in Pakistan to ponder over the implications of the Korean question in relation to its bearing on the defence of our own State.

Before making my own comments, it may help the reader to have a resume of events leading up to the present conflict in Korea.

If you consult a map of Korea you will find that it is a peninsula, having an area of 86,000 square miles, occupying a strategically important place at the centre of the China-Japan-Russian triangle. Geologically regarded Korea is rich in mineral wealth. There are considerable deposits of sandstone, slate and limestone; and, at places, even gold has been discovered on the mainland. Its climate is equable and salubrious and the annual rainfall is about 40 inches. Its population is 23,000,000. The whole of Korea, north and south, shows that the people have common characteristics: both in language and in customs they display homogeneity; and, in fact, regarded from the viewpoint of economy it is impossible to partition the country because in that case neither of these sections will, by itself, be sufficient to sustain the burden of feeding its people and providing employment for them.

Korea's economy is mostly agricultural and has remained so since times immemorial. According to the figures available, in 1927 the total cultivated area was approximately 12,000,000 acres, and since then it has been greatly enlarged. Rice, millet, barley, beans, pepper and potatoes are grown in abundance. To these might be added the fish trade which in 1926 was valued at £ 500,000.

Although Confusianism and Budhism have been the two rival religions introduced into the mainland in the early centuries of the Christian era, they have never been responsible for the formation of religious parties giving rise to a political conflict. Of late years, Christian Missionaries have infiltrated into the mainland and have carried on their work side by side with other Missions. The cause of education in Korea, as in other countries in the Far East, has not registered any appreciable progress. In fact, the little education that has been imparted to the Koreans, has largely been due to the work done by Christian Missionaries.

The history of Korea from the beginning of the 20th century, is dominated by the wars carried on by Japan in furtherance of its imperialistic designs. During the Russo-Japanese War, Japan made a treaty with Korea guaranteeing the independence of the latter and the protection of the Royal House. But with the march of time, it became increasingly apparent that Japan had sinister designs on Korea; and, in fact, it was due to the conspiracy of Japan that in 1907 the Emperor of Korea was forced to abdicate in favour of his son. The Korean army was also disbanded. Between 1910 and 1944, Korean history presents us with an increasing political consciousness on the part of the Korean people to achieve self-rule and establish a constitutional form of Government. In 1919, under the impulse of President Wilson's policy, the Korean peoples were fired with the hope of liberty and a general uprising of the Korean peoples was imminent but was averted—thanks to the counteracting influence weilded by powerful Christian elements in the Peninsula. Such an uprising would have

been a major disaster for Japan. On March 1, 1919, was drawn up a Declaration of Independence by the Representatives of the Nation who met in Seoul, and this was presented to the Japanese authorities for their consideration: although this was not accompanied by any threat of violence, still the Japanese, who were afraid of a possible Korean uprising, broke in upon them; then followed a reign of terror and torture in which several Korean heroes were killed. The cause of Korean independence, however, inspite of the massacre did not suffer any serious setback. Many of its leaders met secretly in Seoul to establish a provisional Government for Korea and elected Dr. Syngman Rhee, as its President. The headquarters of this Government were later shifted to Shanghai. The executive headquarters of the New Republic of Korea were established in Shanghai, and from thence onwards a series of representations were made on various occasions to impress upon the European powers the supreme necessity of securing the independence of the Korean people. It was this movement that gathered momentum; and in the Cairo Declaration of December 1943, after a meeting between Roosevelt-Churchill and Chiang Kai Shek, Korea was promised independence in "due course". Then came the Potsdam and Moscow Declarations confirming the same attitude to Korea.

These events have been recapitulated because unless they are kept in view, the controversy that raged in the General Assembly upon a resolution that was tabled by the U.S.A. in the middle of 1947, cannot be appreciated.

The Representative of the United States requested the inclusion of the Independence of Korea as one of the items on the agenda of the Assembly on the ground that the Russian Government was not willing to implement its previous Declaration. He stated that both by the Cairo Declaration of 1943 and the subsequent Potsdam and Moscow Declarations of 1945, which were subscribed to by the USSR, the Korean people had been assured that

independence would be granted to them after a decision was taken as to the method of establishing a Provisional Government for Korea. For over two years the U. S. attempted to reach an agreement with the USSR on the method of implementing the Moscow Agreement of December 1945. But these efforts proved abortive and the independence of Korea was no further advanced. All further attempts to solve the Korean problem by means of bilateral negotiations were fruitless. Finally the matter was brought up before the General Assembly.

The Representative of the USSR replied by saying that if there was no decision on the methods of implementing the Moscow Declaration the blame lay entirely with the U.S.A.: the Representative of the USSR bitterly complained against the very propriety of bringing the subject for discussion before the General Assembly. Under the terms of the Moscow Declaration a Commission was to be set up to seek the co-operation of the Korean-Democratic Political Party and Social Organisations with a view to establishing the Provisional Democratic Government of Korea. All along in 1946, and also in 1947, it was the U.S.A. that refused its co-operation in this behalf. The USSR in August 1947 proposed the establishment of the Korean Constituent Assembly, consisting of the Representatives of the Democratic Political Parties and Social Organisations, but this proposal was also rejected by the United States.

The United States' resolution recommended the holding of elections under observation by the United Nations as a step leading towards the independence of Korea and finally the withdrawal of troops; while the USSR's proposal recommended the immediate withdrawal of troops and the holding of unsupervised elections. During the course of the debate, the USSR submitted the proposal that the Representative of the Korean People should be summoned to participate in the discussion. Ultimately the resolution of the U.S.A. was carried, with some modifications, by a vote of thirty-six to nought, with four abstentions. It was under

this resolution that a temporary Commission on Korea was set up and was charged with the duty of holding elections not later than the 31st March 1948 on the basis of adult suffrage.

The Commission was appointed on November 14, 1947. It submitted its report in August 1948, and as is well known, the elections were held only in such parts of Korea as were accessible to the Commission. Every effort on the part of the Commission to establish *liaison* with the Soviet Authorities in North Korea proved unsuccessful. The report showed that the elections were held only in South Korea. These elections took place on 10th May, 1948. After the elections, Dr. Rhee was elected President and he appointed a Cabinet headed by Lee-Bum-Suk. On December 12, the General Assembly passed, by a vote of forty-eight to six, a resolution declaring the Republic of Korea to be "A Lawful Government having effective control and jurisdiction."

In the Northern area of Korea, however, another Government was organized: a Constitution for the People's Democratic Republic of Korea with jurisdiction all over Korea was presented to the North Koreans People's Committee—the organization through which the Russians controlled this Zone. On 1st May the Constitution was approved and elections were held on October 25, 1948. Then Soviet troops were withdrawn to adjacent Russian territory and the former Commander of the General Army in North Korea was appointed Ambassador to the Korean Peoples' Republic.

It is against this historical background that the flare-up in Korea has to be understood. There are conflicting versions as to who actually started the trouble. The Russians have maintained that the trouble was started by the South Koreans as it was the South Korean Army that had invaded North Korea. It has been emphasized in the Russian Press that the War in Korea was provoked by General MacArthur who, according to the Russians, is not

only a maniac but a man who considers himself the future lord of the whole of Asia. The South Koreans on the other hand claim, that they were attacked by the North Koreans. The intervention by the United Nations has been justified by its apologists on the ground that the attack by the North Koreans was an act of aggression which 'constituted a threat to the peace and security of the world.'

The outbreak of war in Korea, and America's decision to intervene, has provoked a series of conflicting comments from the European nations: Mr. Truman's announcement of American armed intervention was, to begin with, greeted with enthusiasm but the later course of events has provoked a somewhat more sceptical attitude on their part. The view taken was that this was not a fight for Syngman Rhee but a fight necessitated by the call of the hour to honour the pledges which America had given. When Trygve Lie on behalf of the United Nations appealed to the Member States to send ground forces the response elicited was very meagre indeed. After weeks of "lingering deliberation" several Governments were able to persuade themselves only to "consider" such a request and the total relief offered by them is not worth mentioning. Although practically every Member State acknowledged its duty to support the effort to stem the tide of the Communist aggression, yet excuses were not wanting to justify an incapacity on the part of the various Member-States to offer any military help. In July 1950 one of the *influential magazines* of Europe observed "Many have excused themselves on various pretexts, others have made laughable offers. Thus the Scandinavians have restricted themselves to sending medical supplies. The *Latin Republic* is sending 30 Officers. France is sparing a *Despatch Boat*."

The course of events touching the strategy of armies fighting under the United Nations flag is a matter of recent history and in fact one for military experts to vindicate or to denounce. But the good faith of the armed intervention by the United Nations can only be understood by reference

to the controversy that arose with regard to the crossing of the 38th Parallel. There were some who said that the armies of General MacArthur, ought to march across the 38th Parallel and occupy the whole of Korea. This was to be done as a measure of erecting an effective barrier against aggression. After the whole of Korea was thus cleared 'satisfactorily' elections could be held and it would then be for the people of North Korea to show what sort of Government they wanted. Mr. Syngman Rhee would then be the Premier of a united Korea and would rebuild the shattered country with the aid of the United Nations. Sharply opposed to this was the view that the United Nations' forces should not be allowed to cross the 38th Parallel and that every effort should be made to end the war in Korea by a negotiated peace. It was suggested by B. N. Rao, the Indian Representative, in the General Assembly that a renewed call should be issued to North Korea to agree within a stated time-limit to a cease-fire, and to the holding of general elections in the whole of Korea under the United Nations' supervison. But this suggestion was overruled with the result that MacArthur's armies did cross the 38th Parallel and they sustained a decisive setback at the hands of Communist China.

What is the significance of the Korean episode in relation to the world order and what must be the policy that Pakistan ought to pursue in defining its attitude to this affair? It is significant to note that the spread of Communism in South East Asia has taken the whole world by surprise: tremendous progress has been made and all the territorial gains have been secured by Russia without the loss of an appreciable number of soldiers or of military equipment. That is because the strategy of communism relies more on internal unrest in a given country than upon external aggression. The forces of internal disruption in a given capitalistic country like unemployment, a low standard of living, hunger, poverty and want, are the Generals which who fight the war on behalf of Communism within

the country: all the Russians have done so far is only to choose the *decisive hour* to strike.

The above, in fact, has been their strategy throughout South East Asia. We know that, according to the time-table, after China comes Indo-China, then Tibet; and then will follow Burma and ultimately the Indian mainland.

The fighting in Korea has shown the weakness of American strategy. America expects to counteract the menace of Communism in South East Asia by the process of large scale production of the tools and weapons involved in mechanical warfare and by fostering a fear of the atom bomb in the mind of the Russians. The fate of the American armies in Korea illustrates the weakness of American strategy and, incidentally, furnishes a ground for the belief that Communism in Asia must be combated with other weapons and by another strategy. With communism now threatening India from Tibet, it is time for Pakistan to think what it must do in order to consolidate its own position in the new world order. It must decide for itself what the ideological differences are that keep it away from communism and to what extent it is prepared to meet the threat of communism. On the North it would be easy for the Russians to land forces in Pakistan; and then from the Indian border there is the perennial fear that if India is overrun by communism, Pakistan will find it difficult to maintain its present constitutional structure. Should the conflict in Korea extend beyond Korea, both India and Pakistan would be in grave peril and in that event it is for the statesmen in Pakistan to consider whether or not they should enter into an alliance with India for common defence. This consideration is decisive: we have to think of East Pakistan as being the most vulnerable spot where communism is likely to strike a decisive blow in the first instance. It would be folly to say that Russia has no designs on India or Pakistan. With an active communist party working in India and with the same party working underground in Pakistan it would be suicidal for both these newly created Dominions not to

face facts. In these days of aerial warfare the Himalayas can be no barrier to an assault upon India from the North, and it is from that point of view that the threat both to India and Pakistan—both from North as well as the South-east, must be viewed.

Pakistan's participation in the deliberations of the United Nations must be controlled by this crucial consideration, *viz.* how far is it prepared to take its stand against communism. If it finds that it will not be possible for it to expect much aid in the hour of its need from the western capitalistic bloc it ought, here and now, to declare unequivocally what policy is it going to adopt in relation to the affairs in the Far East. Pakistanis must also read the writing on the wall: they must give to the toiling millions their share of the national wealth: they must speed up agrarian reforms and allow the peasant to enjoy the benefits of a liberal, democratic rule. Those statesmen whose thinking is controlled by their own self-interest in the existing economico-political set up, ought to realize that they must move with the time. The princely privileged class has crumbled everywhere; and so will it here only, the part of prudence in the process is to accept the new situation with good grace and good humour or else the steam-roller of the new economic forces will grind it to powder.

Nor has a Muslim State much to *fear* from Communism. Basically, regarded from the economic point of view Islam is different from communist ideology only in so much that it is ahead of it by at least two hundred years. If the Muslims were to comprehend rationally what is contained in the 'Book' they would find in it a confirmation of my assertion. The other incidental articles of the communistic creed are only an embroidery upon the economic issue and their rejection by Pakistan will be consistent with our duty to God and to Truth. However, it is essential that Communism should be considered an immediate, urgent and pressing

problem. Let the Nation decide rationally and fearlessly what it wants—and God will not let down His Servants in their desire to serve Him.

1950 :
[First appeared in "Daylight"]

The old notion that people can "keep themselves to themselves" and not be touched by what is happening to their neighbours, or even to the people who live a hundred miles off, is a most dangerous mistake. The saying that we are members one of another is not a mere pious formula to be repeated in church without any meaning; it is a literal truth; for though the rich end of the town can avoid living with the poor end, it cannot avoid dying with it when the plague comes. People will be able to keep themselves to themselves as much as they please when they have made an end of poverty; but until then they will not be able to shut out the sights and sounds and smells of poverty from their daily walks, nor to feel sure from day to day that its most violent and fatal evils will not reach them through their strongest police guards. . .

We cannot afford to have poor people anyhow, whether they be lazy or busy, drunken or sober, virtuous or vicious, thrifty or careless, wise or foolish. If they deserve to suffer let them be made to suffer in some other way; for mere poverty will not hurt them half as much as it will hurt their innocent neighbors. It is a public nuisance as well as a private misfortune. Its toleration is a national crime.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.

* * * *

It would have staggered an eighteenth-century landowner to be told that *anyone* supposed that every other person had as good a claim as he to enjoy the means to civilised living, and that no claim of his to more than was enjoyed by labourers and other riff-raff could be considered except on the basis of its necessity for increasing total production and thus helping to raise the general standard of life. Even to-day most considerable owners of property and recipients of large incomes believe that they have a claim to be allowed to consume more than other people, not only because they believe they give the community superior service, but also, and in some cases exclusively, because they are 'gentlemen' or because they claim to enjoy their 'rights of property' or of superior education or culture irrespective of the service which they rendered to the community as a whole.

G. D. H. COLE.

TENANCY REFORMS AND LEGISLATION

Students of the social sciences are aware of the importance of the question of tenancy reforms. If social justice is to be the ideal of all social organisations, justice between the landlord and the tenant would appear to be the basic problem for those who realise the inequity and injustice of the kind of relationship between the landlord and the tenant which prevails in Pakistan today. Regarded historically, this relation ship would appear to be the result of primitive customs, backed by tribal laws; and it is only in recent years that we find that that relationship is being modified and regulated by the will of the legislature. Humanitarians and social reformers are all agreed that the actual tillers of the soil do not get an adequate return for their labour, and that the proprietor or landlord gets more than the share to which he would, in fairness and in justice, be entitled. They are all in favour of a change, and some of them advocate so sudden and momentous change, that what they want can really be described as a 'revolution'. What they do not agree about, however, is the way in which that change or revolution is to be brought about.

The question of Tenancy reforms therefore splits itself into three items :

1. What means should be adopted to secure a *just* relationship between the landlord and the tenant;

2. Whether it is at all worthwhile to recognise the institution of private ownership of land and allow a landlord to grow rich merely as a result of the exploitation of the labour of those who are employed by him and finally,

3. What *alternative* is to be adopted if the abolition of the institution of private ownership is to be carried out.

At the outset, it may be pointed out that the means of bringing about a social change are twofold :—

1. Orderly and steady evolution of the proposed scheme of things without in any manner disturbing the stability or equilibrium of society:

2. *Revolution* i.e. the use of organised force against the forces of conservatism by those who believe in the new ideology.

Revolution is the creed of those who believe that the State is the instrument or agent of those who wield power in Society, and that the State would, therefore, never be a party to the programme of wresting power from the hands of those whose agent it itself is. If power is to be snatched from the idle rich, "the drones of society" it can only be taken by armed insurrection, by the organised force of the "have-nots". Experience shows, however, that the method of revolution is fraught with dangerous consequences and that mere *brute force* has never succeeded in achieving any end, however good and laudable that end may be. Assuming, therefore, that we are all 'evolutionists' and believers in constitutional methods of bringing about a change in society, what is going to be our approach to the question of tenancy reforms?

Land, as a commodity, is distinguishable by some of its special characteristics which do not govern other commodities known to economics. Some of these special characterists are: firstly, that land is a source of all other forms of material wealth; secondly, that it is not *created by man*, although it is modifiable by his labour; thirdly, that it is *permanent* and is not liable to those processes of decay and destruction to which other commodities are subject; and, finally, that it is limited in extent, no matter whether it is regarded as belonging to any individual country or is regarded comprehensively as covering the whole surface of the globe. It necessarily follows from these characteristics that it is unjust to recognise the claim of large estate proprietors to own huge tracts of land, because by that

very process they acquire unlimited power not only over the land and the things it contains but over all those whom they are able to employ for the purpose of cultivating *it*. Since land, as a form of wealth, is *permanent*, its ownership tends to create, as between those who are the owners of the land and those who are not, a type of inequality which brings about a stultification of all social progress. This inequality becomes a permanent feature of social life and, as has been argued by the propounders of the theory of surplus value, this inequality between class and class, with the passage of time, goes on widening till a stage is reached when it begets a class war with the result that under its impact the whole social equilibrium breaks down. If, therefore, the institution of private ownership of land is to be recognised, legislation must intervene to regulate that relationship and the following recommendations have been made by those who have studied the problem :—

(1) *Taxation :* This was first suggested by Henry George, the well known author of "Progress and Poverty" in 1879. This consists in allowing the owner of the soil to surrender the whole of the surplus value arising out of land attributable to "social accidents", such as the increase of population and demands, the growth of towns, the rise in the price level, and in general, of those things that are subsumed under the name of "progress". His recommendation was that in so far as any wealth that accrues to the owner of land from circumstances outside the individual's control is concerned, it is unjust and unfair that he should be allowed to retain it and the law should step in and take it away from him by "confiscating this increment through taxation." Thus, he thought, the ideal of justice would be satisfied; for everything that is the outcome of social factors would revert to society, while the owner would retain what was only the result of his *personal* efforts.

(2) *Reduction* in the area of land that could be privately owned: This consists in insisting that no owner of land be allowed to retain land unless he can establish that he is

capable of cultivating it *personally*, i.e. without any hired labour. By implementing this recommendation we can equitably distribute land between man and man, and eleminate the idle drones, the landlords, who grow rich at the cost of other peoples' labour. In actual practice, this recommendation raises very complex questions as to what is meant by "personal labour", since left to himself one man can hardly cultivate anything, and he must necessarily avail of the assistance of the family, or the clan, or any other economic unit of human association for putting the land owned to profitable use. Experience shows that improvement is made if agricultural labour is employed on a large and scientific scale: it follows that if the sphere of personal action is narrowed down to mere individual action, it is doubtful if any useful results would be reached.

(3) The process of *nationalisation;* by which is meant the transfer of land from private ownership to national ownership. By nationalisation we necessarily mean, in this context, agrarian nationalisation, *i.e.* an attempt to socialise land *alone* and to leave other forms of capital under the control of private ownership. Nationalisation of land may even obtain a form of collectivistic farming and is, in that form, quite compatible with individual ownership of land, provided it is restricted to the ownership of the area which a proprietor is able to cultivate by his own labour. The difficulty with regard to the implementation of the programme of nationalisation of land consists in the *method* that is to be adopted by the State in securing the land which is privately owned. Before there can be nationalisation of land there must be expropriation of the existing owner and it is with regard to the solution of this aspect of the question that those who are in favour of nationalisation of land are not agreed. One suggestion is to expropriate the owner without compensation or without indemnifying him in any manner. This suggestion is based on the view, accepted by some reformers, that it is open to the Legislature to order the confiscation of

all land in the interests of society as a whole; and that, as against the will of society, no individual owner can claim any vested right in any property. It has been suggested that this can be brought about either by passing a law declaring all land privately owned as belonging to the State, or by abolishing the right of succession and thus allowing a given owner to retain enjoyment of his estate only for life, so that after his death, the land reverts to the State.

Sharply contrasted from this mode of approach to the nationalisation of land, is the view of those who believe that expropriation without indemnification is unjust. That is why some have advocated the procedure of the State buying up the land from the private owner on payment of fair compensation. Critics of this method have pointed out the difficulty which is inherent in the programme of buying up of land by the State. They say that the State must raise a sufficient amount either by taxation or other methods before it is in a position to buy up land from the private owner, and that the inevitable result of all this would be that the loan raised by the State would exceed the revenue which the State would derive from the ownership of the land. There are some economists, however, who have worked out the details of the programme and have argued that that would not necessarily be so and that the State in time to come would soon find the operation of owning land profitable by reason of a subsequent increase in the amount of the revenues to be derived from the land.

If the State is to be the owner of the land, must the State allow the land to be cultivated by professional agriculturists? In which case, is it not obvious that the previous owners that have been expropriated, again become the *de facto* owners, although in law, they may be termed lessees? Will not the result remain the same, so that the State becomes the owner merely in name and the previous inequitable institution of private ownership of land continues to be the order of the day? The answer is that the lessees of the land would be subjected to several obligations to

the State that were not acknowledged by them while they were the owners. The State would regulate the questions relating to the extent of the land to be allotted to individual lessees, the rent at which it should be allotted, the terms on which it is to be retained; and these terms might include abolition of the laws of succession or capacity on the part of the lessee to sell, sublet or mortgage his lease-hold. The State may as well stipulate with the lessee that in the event of the land lying uncultivated his grant might be forfeited; and that if it is cultivated by him through hired labour, it will be taken away from him, or the area of the land allotted will be proportionately diminished. The State may also set up cooperative associations with scientific advisory committees attached to them to whom it may hand over large tracts of land for the purpose of cultivation and thus bring about considerable improvement in the condition of the land and also increase its productivity.

All this discussion is fruitful in so for as it indicates the possible alternatives that are open to the Legislature of a given country in case it means to bring about Agrarian Reforms. Which one of these in particular would actually be adopted in Pakistan must depend upon several factors. The steady evolution of the new order of economic relationships either between the private owner of the land and the tenant, or, between the State, as owner of the land, and the allottee, would necessarily depend upon the formulation of an economic policy which is consistent with the habits, customs, beliefs and traditions of a given people. Legislation, in a sovereign democratic state, is made by men who are drawn, as we say, from the streets of the earth, and their decisions by and large reflect the opinions of the masses. Before any programme of tenancy legislation and reform is undertaken in the new State of Pakistan, it is essential to secure precise statistics, to formulate the relationship which Pakistan is to bear to the outside world and to consider the type of economy it is going to have. All these are very important issues and they require a great deal

of data to be accumulated before they can be dealt with, effectively.

I would like to conclude this talk by a couple of practical suggestions which appear to me to be of paramount importance. The landlord in Pakistan today has a great deal of *personal* hold over the life of the cultivator; so much so that this iniquitous, harsh and unjust relationship is in no sense different from the institution of slavery known to the ancient world. The cultivator is not so much attached to the earth which he cultivates as tied to the landlord whose land he is supposed to cultivate. And the zamindar dominates him as nothing else dominates him. That type of legislation and reform which renders the relationship between the landlord and the tenant *impersonal* would be welcome because that would liberate the peasant from the yoke of economic bondage to, and the tyranny of, the landlord. This can be brought about by giving to the cultivator a permanent interest in the land, and by not allowing him to remain at the mercy of the landlord, who for anything that a cultivator may do to vindicate his conscience and honour, might summarily evict him and thus expose him and his family to a great deal of suffering and poverty. Even education cannot succeed in putting an end to the sort of bondage in which a peasant finds himself today, because it is impossible to educate the peasant who is economically at the mercy of the landlord. How this 'impersonalisation' of the relationship between the landlord and the tenant is to be brought about is a problem for the practical politician to ponder over; but one way whereby it can be achieved appears to me to be that the state should intervene as a third party to the contract of tenancy entered into by the landlord with the tenant. The other suggestion is that the State should *fix* a reasonable maximum of land which could be owned by a landlord and in order to reduce the extent of present large holdings, the State should evolve a scheme whereby a *Hari* is enabled, at the end of each year, to buy the land from his landlord and tack on the same

as a collateral accretion to his holding till he too reaches the maximum holding fixed by the state. This is the only way the State can raise the economic level of the masses and reduce the power of the idle-rich landlords.

These suggestions *sound strange*; but their strangeness seems to lie in the fact that they are so *sound*.

1949:

[*A Broadcast from Radio Pakistan.*]

Today a growing minority urge that capital punishment should be entirely abolished, although the majority support it as the appropriate penalty for murder and treason. It is now realised that if public opinion regards the punishment as out of all proportion to the nature of offence the law defeats its own object, since even the courts may encourage evasion of law.

G. W. PATON

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1. The general object which all laws have, or ought to have, in common, is to augment the total happiness of the community; and therefore, in the first place, to exclude, as far as may be, every thing that tends to subtract from that happiness; in other words, to exclude mischief.

2. But all punishment is mischief; all punishment in itself is evil. Upon the principle of utility, if it ought at all to be admitted, it ought only to be admitted in as far as it promises to exclude some greater evil.

JEREMY BENTHAM

Almost everything that we call higher culture is based upon the spiritualising and intensifying of cruelty—this is my thesis, the "wild beast" has not been slain at all, it lives, it flourishes, it has only been—transfigured; that which constitutes the painful delight of tragedy is cruelty; that which operates agreeably in so-called tragic sympathy, and at the basis even of everything sublime, up to the highest and the most delicate thrills of metaphysics, obtains its sweetness solely from the intermingled ingredient of cruelty."

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

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FRIEDERICK NEITZSCHE.

THOUGHTS ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

For the last two hundred years or so, penologists all the world over have been busy reflecting on the desirability or otherwise of providing for death sentence, as a form of punishment, for persons found guilty by Courts of certain heinous offences. The controversy is still raging, and I remember that when I was in England in November 1949, the question was being hotly debated in the English Press.

I do not propose to deal with the problem of capital punishment in all its comprehensiveness. The question I propose to answer is—is it morally right for the State to deliberately put certain class of offenders to death after they have been found guilty? I concede that no *absolute* answer is admissible to the question herein raised; for much will always depend on the conditions that prevail in a given society where the application of capital punishment may come to be considered. But to the extent to which it is possible to regard the problem in the abstract, I wish to look at the problem strictly from the view-point of the principle which I propose to formulate and to apply to the solution of the problem in hand.

Regarded historically, capital punishment, that is, the practice of deliberately putting an offender to death, as a measure of social policy imposed by the ruling authority of the community, is a very old one indeed and modern research establishes that there was no period of time when men lived in society but had not recognized this form of punishment.

The difference between the old and the new conception merely consists in this: that the forms of human behaviour punishable with death under the old law had a

religious sanction behind them, like the necessity of ridding the group of a member who had brought upon it the wrath of a dreaded deity by the violation of a taboo, such as killing the totem animal of the tribe or committing incest. Offences like homicide, theft and other secular offences did not concern the community but rather the injured party or immediate family who might, at will, either take summary vengeance or compound the felony by taking compensation from the offender or his family.

Since the middle of the last century, there has been a definite move towards the abolition of the death penalty for the offence of murder. This abolition has been achieved in Austria, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Holland, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, Latvia, Rumania, Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Russia and most of the cantons of Switzerland. In Central and South America only 6 states retain the death penalty for murder. Of the British colonies, only Queensland in Australia has abolished capital punishment. Only twelve of the 48 American states have abolished the death penalty for murder and, of these—four have revived it in the reaction resulting from the late war. It is probably because of the influence of Great Britain that the progress towards the abolition of capital punishment has been retarded, and this is so because the special legislative reform in this direction is obstructed by the inherent Conservatism of the English people. The recent figures show that France, of late years, has executed less than one-third of the condemned criminals subject to death penalty. In 1928 Germany did not execute even one out of the 40 sentenced to death.

The State punishes criminals for the following reasons :—

(a) to deter the offender from criminal courses of conduct;

(b) to make an example of him so that others be restrained from the commission of crimes;

(c) to subject the offender to punishment for the wrong

he has done in order to enable him to expiate the guilt; the belief being that his guilt would be washed away as a result of the purifying influence of punishment. Guilt plus punishment, it is said, amount to innocence. And finally,

(d) to reform a criminal by changing his character by subjecting him to proper environmental influence.

Those who advocate the policy of maintaining capital punishment do so mainly on the ground that this is the only form of punishment that can really restrain people with criminal propensities from committing heinous offences. A man who takes the life of another shall pay with his own; and a man who conspires against the State shall not be permitted to retain a life which is rendered possible only as a result of the existence of such a State.

Now, in advancing this argument, the defenders of capital punishment lose sight of a very important factor: a factor which vitally affects the correctness of the view-point, with which they approach the problem. If one could be sure that our law courts would never commit an error of judgment in reaching a conclusion with regard to the guilt of a particular offender, the argument that such an offender ought to be exposed to the extreme penalty of the law would be sound and it would not be possible to dispute its validity. But the difficulty involved in maintaining this view-point precisely consists in this that, human judgment being what it is, the possibility of an innocent man being erroneously convicted of an offence punishable with death, cannot be excluded. In such a case, the extreme penalty of the law comes to be imposed on one who had never merited it in the sense that he never committed the crime for which he is being punished.

The question then is. supposing the real state of affairs is discovered at a later stage and the man who has been declared guilty by a court of law and actually executed, is discovered to be innocent of the crime imputed to him, can anything be done to undo the mischief that has been occasioned as a result of the erroneous finding of the court

or tribunal as the case may be? It might then be asked: Has the State the right to take away that which it cannot give?

It may be argued that this mode of regarding the problem is not sound in principle in so far as, so long as we have to punish an offender, some risk is necessarily to be undertaken in the process of subjecting him to the punishment that he merits. Error of judgment may vitiate every and any finding of guilt in respect of a particular person; and if you are not prepared to take the risk involved in punishing innocent persons found guilty by the law courts, the whole machinery of criminal law will come to a stand still and no person can effectively be punished merely because we are never in a position to claim with certainty that a particular offender has really committed the crime for which he has been punished.

This no doubt is a weighty criticism but is, in my opinion, once again onesided. Although it is true that the possibility of an error of judgment cannot be eliminated by those who have to administer the criminal law, still, when an innocent person is sentenced to a form of punishment other than death, you can always undo the injustice subsequently by adequately compensating him. Money compensation is known to have healed many wounds although it has never been efficacious in obliterating the scars that visibly persist even after the wounds unjustly inflicted have been healed. But the question in respect of the death penalty is radically different because when life is taken away, it cannot be restituted; just as you cannot bid a yesterday return, you cannot recall the dead to life.

Is it, therefore, *morally* proper for a State to impose the death sentence upon a citizen proved to be guilty of a crime by its law courts.

Considering that our law courts are guided exclusively by evidence that is submitted by the parties to the proceedings, it becomes all the more difficult in a vast majority of cases to reach a correct conclusion about the

guilt or otherwise of criminals who come to be involved in those proceedings.

This world, I need not emphasise, is notoriously wicked. The testimony that is generally made available to the courts of law is more often than not tainted and perjured and a conspiracy of circumstances and fortuitous coincidences in the lives of some unfortunate people often go a long way in tightening the noose round their necks; although, in reality, they may be absolutely innocent of the accusations brought against them. The judges interpret evidence in the light of their experience and we all know how very subjective is that approach to evidence which is justified in the name of experience. Justice continues to vary with the foot of the Chancellor. There are instance where the jury has found certain offenders guilty and, in the same case upon a re-trial having been ordered by a superior court, the jury consisting of another set of persons have found the same offenders 'not guilty' of the offence, on practically the same evidence.

The State may be justified in punishing offenders in cases where they are proved to be guilty by its law courts but it must, from the ethical point of view, be restrained from imposing forms of punishment where, from the nature of the case, it may be impossible for it to retract the harm done and declare the offender innocent. After a man is dead and gone, it is no satisfaction to him to have a posthumous declaration of his innocence pronounced in his favour. We are told that Joan of Arc was "burnt for witchcraft and sorcery in 1431; rehabilitated after a fashion in 1456, designated Venerable in 1904, declared Blessed in 1908 and finally canonised in 1920"; but the cynic is justified in remarking that it is a matter of no consequence to the soul that has been subjected to torture while it was encased in this "muddy vesture of decay" to bestow all soothing appellations on it, after its earthly life has been extinguished upon the gallows or the guillotine.

Let us now consider the psychological approach—

and by psychological approach I mean the direct experience of the person who is subjected to the death penalty. It is of course very difficult even sympathetically to enter into the disposition of one who awaits the fateful hour when he will be called to face the sentence of death. In fact, dead man tells no tales and, excepting perhaps the dubious claim made in the seance room that the dead soul communicates his experiences through a medium, there is no other means available for us to know what is suffered by those who are made to pass through the portals of death by having to suffer the death penalty. I am not at this moment thinking of the mere "physical pain" involved in being hanged or in being shot. It is conceivable in principle, to decide which one of the various means of imposing that punishment whether by hanging, by firing, by electrocution, or by guillotine is the least painful; but that is not what I am considering here. It is in fact the process of "living through" the last moments that constitutes in my opinion the most excruciating type of torture for the condemned offender.

One instance of the, immortalised by one who had a personal experience to support his view of the matter, need only be referred to here. I am thinking of that passage in Dostoevsky's remarkable book *The Idiot* where that great Russian novelist has portrayed the last feelings of a condemned criminal. Dostoevsky himself, it may be recalled had been condemned to suffer death by the firing squad, but just a little before the sentence could be executed, he was pardoned and, instead, ordered to suffer transportation for life in Siberia.

Dostoevsky puts following words, in the mouth of the Hero Prince Mushkin, in *The Idiot*.

"There was a very strange feature in this case, strange because of its extremely rare occurrence. This man had once been brought to the scaffold in company with several others and had had the sentence of death by shooting passed upon him for some political crime.

"Twenty minutes later he had been reprieved and some other punishment substituted; but the interval between the two sentences, twenty minutes, or at least a quarter of an hour, had been passed in the certainty that within a few minutes he must die.

"I was very anxious to hear him speak of his impressions during that dreadful time, and I several times inquired of him as to what he thought, and felt.

"He remembered everything with the most accurate and extraordinary distinctness, and declared that he would never forget a single iota of the experience.

"He said that those five minutes seemed to him to be a most interminable period, an enormous wealth of time; he seemed to be living in these minutes, so many lives that there was no need as yet to think of that last moment so that he made several arrangements, dividing up the time into portions one for saying farewell to his companions, two minutes for that; then a couple more for thinking over his own life and career and all about himself; and another minute for a last look around.

"He remembered having divided his time like this quite well. While saying good-bye to his friends he recollected asking one of them some most usual every day question, and being much interested in the answer.

"Then having bade farewell, he embarked upon those two minutes which he had allotted to looking into himself; he knew beforehand what he was going to think about.

He wished to put it to himself as quickly and clearly as possible, that here was he, a living, thinking man, and that in three minutes he would be nobody; or if somebody or something, then what and where?

"He thought he would decide this question once for all in these last three minutes. A little way off there stood a church, and its gilded spire glittered in the sun. He remembered staring stubbornly at this spire, and at the rays of light sparking from it.

"He could not tear his eyes from these rays of light; he got the idea that these rays were his new nature, and that in three minutes he would become one of them, amalgamated somehow with them.

"The repugnance to what must ensue almost immediately, and the uncertainty, were dreadful, he said: but worst of all was the idea: What should I do if I were not to die now? What if I were to return to life again? What an eternity of days, and all mine! How I should grudge and count up every minute of it, so as to waste not a single instant!

"He said that this thought weighed so upon him and became such a terrible burden upon his brain that he could not bear it, and wished they would shoot him quickly and have done with it".

The above affords a peep into the inner disposition of a condemned criminal and shows that from his point of view, these last moments are lived in excruciating torture. Some have even maintained that the head that is chopped off continues, for sometime at least after its severance, to be aware that it has been severed from its body. These considerations give rise to the all important question: "Is it permissible for the State to design these diabolical forms of punishment to overawe offenders actual or potential?"

It has been well said by the anarchists that the whole paraphernalia of the State machinery is based on cruelty. In fact Marx went farthest in denouncing the State as an instrument of coercion. But, although these harsh and one-sided views may not be strictly true, the fact remains that it is incompatible with human dignity and self respect that is due to individual life that State should atall be a party to these diabolical means for exterminating "Life" which is sacred. Man was made in the image of God. Even the very worst offender may yet carry in his heart a "divine spark", a spark which, left to itself, may in time succeed in changing entirely the quality of human life. No man is so depraved or so bad as not even to hope for his redemption

and salvation. Cases of the worst sinners being converted are not unknown.

To those who maintain that if the death punishment is abolished heinous offences like murder and sedition would be on the increase, it is sufficient to point out that despite the enforcement of this form of punishment for the past so many centuries, those offences continue to be committed with perhaps unabated vigour. There are criminals who would commit a crime whatever be the punishment for it. Not even the worst habitual criminal takes delight in the commission of crime, merely because it is a crime.

The argument that we hang criminals much in the manner and precisely for the reason that we shoot mad dogs is not sound, for the very obvious consideration that, the acceptance of this argument involves our refusal to recognize the relative worth of a dog and a human being. Besides there are other more effective ways of dealing even with the "mad dogs of humanity". All religions, not excluding Buddhism, have forbidden suicide and have characterised every attempt at "self destruction" as being something in the nature of an unpardonable sin. The moral basis for that universal religious injunction appears to be, that the life that is given to man, is not his, and that, "bound is man, hand and foot, his duties herebelow to fulfil". Now if a man is not allowed to take his own life, over which he has *prima facie* some claim—how could the State, which as an institution is justifiable only because it renders the growth of individual life possible, be permitted to take away that life?

Can an individual in surrendering himself to State-control hand over to the State the power of ending his life, when the same individual has no such right to deal with himself in the same way? Even if we agree with the Hegelians that the State is something more than the mere sum total of its citizens still, it must represent the objective counterpart of his subjective nature and that again means

that what is immoral for the individual is equally immoral for the State, regardless of the fact whether or not the act in question is sanctioned by the State Power.

Capital Punishment is thus, in my opinion, immoral, inhuman and contrary to the law of the spiritual Evolution of Man.

1950:

["Address to the Students"]

I stand midway between youth and age like a man who has missed his train : too late for the last and too early for the next. What am I to do? What am I? A soldier who has lost his nerve, a thief who at his first great theft has found honesty the best policy and restored his booty to its owner. Nature never intended me for soldiering or thieving: I am by nature and destiny a preacher. I am the new Ecclesiastes. But I have no Bible, no creed : the war has shot both out of my hands. The war has been a fiery forcing house in which we have grown with a rush like flowers in a late spring following a terrible winter. And with what result? This : that we have outgrown our religion, outgrown our political system, outgrown our own strength of mind and character. The fatal word NOT has been miraculously inserted into all our creeds : in the desecrated temples where we knelt murmuring "I believe" we stand with stiff knees and stiffer necks shouting "Up, all! the erect posture is the mark of the man : let lesser creatures kneel and crawl : we will not kneel and we do not believe." But what next? Is NO enough? For a boy, yes: for a man, never. Are we any the less obsessed with a belief when we are denying it than when we were affirming it? No: I must have affirmations to preach. Without them the young will not listen to me; for even the young grow tired of denials. The negative-monger falls before the soldiers, the men of action, the fighters, strong in the old uncompromising affirmations which give them status, duties, certainty of consequences; so that the pugnacious spirit of man in them can reach out and strike deathblows with steadfastly closed minds. Their way is straight and sure; but it is the way of death; and the preacher must preach the way of life. Oh, if I could only find it! .... I am ignorant: I have lost my nerve and am intimidated: all I know is that I must find the way of life, for myself and all of us, or we shall surely perish. And meanwhile my gift has possession of me: I must preach and preach and preach no matter how late the hour and how short the day, no matter whether I have nothing to say—

....

—or whether in some Pentecostal flame of revelation the Spirit will descend on me and inspire me with a message the sound whereof shall go out unto all lands and realize for us at last the Kingdom and the Power and the Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.

(Aubrey's closing speech in "Too true to be Good")

SIGNIFICANCE OF SHAW'S LIFE AND WORK

Now that the 'Life Force' ('Elan Vital'), that was Shaw, has withdrawn itself from "the muddy vesture of decay", and his "earthly remains" have to "dust been equal made", it is permissible I suppose to reflect on the general course of his life in an attempt to discover the full weight of 'what he felt and what he found', and to estimate the full value of his contribution to the age in which he lived.

His has been a full and rich life indeed! His versatility admits of no controversy. Even those who differ from him, do not deny that his influence on the men and affairs of his generation, both at Home and Abroad, has been phenomenal. The output of his literary work is colossal. Is there a subject he has not written upon? One might be sceptical about the ultimate worth of his life's work, but one cannot deny that Shaw has left a mark on his own time.

The fame and reputation of a man is not something which is absolute and immutable: 'Time' plays curious pranks with the reputation of its victims. Those that go as heroes to the grave have often had their bodies disinterred, desecrated, and defamed: Joan of Arc, on the other hand, is burnt as a witch and is, some centuries later, canonised and resurrected as a "Saint". 'Call no man happy until he be dead' the wise Greeks used to say. Alas, even that is not absolutely true! Our immortality, judged from the point of view of posterity, is after all a problematic affair, something about which no one can atall be certain. Hitler died a sad man. He was condemned as a man who had done his utmost to destroy the world. But now, he too is being looked at somewhat more charitably. It will not be astonishing if, he too, at a somewhat later date, is resurrected

as 'Saint Hitler', the "last Saviour of Christianity" or comes to be regarded as the man who relentlessly fought the "Jewish menace to Civilization".

And so of Bernard Shaw how shall one speak? Looked at in the larger perspective of History, he loses much of that halo and splendour that many of his contemporaries have seen in his face. The question is: Is he a mere child of the age in which "he lived, moved and had his being", or is he "a spectator of all time and all existence"? I propose therefore, to concentrate on the significance of his life and work; I want to see the permanent and the abiding in what he attempted to achieve. I want to bring into focus the crucial and outstanding features of his work. He was a play wright, a pamphleteer and an economico-political philosopher. I would not, however, like to look upon him merely as a man who fulfilled these roles. I want to determine his place in History and, if possible, the extent of the influence which his life and work are likely to have on posterity. I want to grasp, not only the essence but the quintessence of his philosophy; the substance and not the mere husk of what he stood for.

What then is the outstanding trait of Shaw's work?

Shaw, in my opinion, was essentially a social reformer. He was a man who pursued that purpose consistently; and everything that he has written can be regarded as the fulfilment of his mission to instruct and inform his fellow men. He subordinated art, the very dramatic technique of which he was an accredited master, to that purpose. He realised, as has been realised by only a few men before him, that nothing brings about a reformation in society and in the individual more than a clear understanding of the problems of social and individual life. For him, to understand is to transform; to expose the follies and ignorance of mankind, is for him, the surest way of reclaiming and liberating it. Shaw's attitude is thus basically that of a practical statesman. He knows that by throwing a searchlight of criticism on society and by making a caricature of

its follies, he would be in a position to point out the way of social reconstruction and reform. "He," says Mr. C. E. M. Joad, "is a Rationalist in holding that human beings are at bottom rational in the sense that, if you demonstrate a truth and prove a proposition often enough and forcibly enough then no amount of preconceived bias or unconscious emotional position will prevent other people from recognising the truth and accepting the proposition and in the end, acting upon what they accept and recognise since in the last resort as a man thinks so must he act."

Of all the elements that confer power, the ideas which a man expresses constitute the greatest possible source of power. This "power of ideas" is the power that a great writer possesses; a power of releasing trains of thought in the right direction. It is by propagating true ideas that a writer creates a situation in which a social revolution can take place. Had it not been for the ideas of equality and liberty that Rousseau and Voltaire popularised, the French Revolution would not have taken place at the time and in the form it did. The ideas of Christ and Muhammad have played a great part in changing the lives of innumerable human beings. Oliver Wendell Holmes was making the same point when he observed: "To an imagination of any scope the most far reaching form of power is not money, it is the command of ideas. If you want great examples read Mr. Leslie Stephen's History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century and see how a hundred years after his death, the abstract speculation of Descartes had become a practical force controlling the conduct of men. Read the works of the great German theorists, and see how much more the world is governed today by Kant than by Bonaparte." All crusades against authority, against tyranny, oppression and dogmatism of the very worst description, have been carried on, only by those, who knew the explosive power of a true idea. "On the one hand it was all the authority that could muster to suppress and destroy with the weapon of exile, imprisonment,

torture and death; and on the other, there was only the power of the idea. And yet, in the last resort, the idea prevailed, though it may have been only for a time, for the victories of the mind have to be won afresh in every age."

A man's way of life is after all the manifestation of his thought. Either he has no thought in which case he is exploited by one who thinks for him and who leads the way for him; or, he himself is a centre of influence in which case he radiates light and warmth to all those who come in contact with him.

Shaw's vocation as a writer is therefore strictly practical. He does not believe in a halfway reform in which the mere pseudo-practical politician believes. This type of politician would like to make men moral by legislation, by securing their conformity to prescribed patterns of behaviour. But, in the end, he does not succeed because we know that that is not the way to succeed. All transformation must first be directed to changing the inner life of a man; it is only by liberating it from the shackles of inertia and ignorance that a firm foundation can be laid for guiding mankind towards the goal of a wiser and nobler life.

Bernard Shaw pressed into the service of this programme of social reconstruction everything which could give an effective, appealing, and, at the same time, an amusing and therefore entertaining expression to the ideas he believed in. In the preface to what he regarded as his classic drama *Back to Methuselah* he set forth this conception of his life's work in a direct and forceful manner.

In an article published in the *New Statesman* somewhere in July 1943, one of Shaw's disciples, Mr. C.E.M. Joad, wrote an imaginary dialogue between himself and his master in order to show the extent to which, in his opinion, Shaw's writings had influenced his generation. Mr. Joad brings out in that imaginary conversation the contrast between the effort made by Shaw to reform mankind and the disproportionate result emerging therefrom. He says to Shaw, "Such an appearance of achievement,

so vast a listening public, so apparently a respectable world—and then look at the world! In spite of its attention, in spite of its apparent respect, it is far from giving heed to what you told it, that it has gone consistently from bad to worse ever since you began to address it. Now, taught by you, I have always believed in the power of ideas, that what a man thinks, determines what he does and so on. Yet here are ideas, the ideas of Shavian philosophy put over with all the force and vivacity of a genius, winning sweeping victories in the intellectual field, yet producing apparently absolutely no effect anywhere else". Shaw in that imaginary dialogue makes the following answer:

"For more than you seem to think, I taught that poverty is the greatest evil—an evil that no society should permit in its citizen. I had it that every citizen should insist upon having money, even if he had to beg, borrow, steal and generally make himself a social nuisance until he got at it. Well, the Beveridge report concedes that point. It also concedes the second—that in a modern community we are all members of one another in so intimate a sense that the misery and degradation of one are the misery and degradation of all. We have all of us, as citizens, a collective responsibility for each of us a fact which social insurance on the latest Beveridge model clearly recognises. You must not expect too much at once. I have always insisted that the pioneers must lead the way. Do you mean to tell me that when I set all the educational world by the ears with the 'vilest abortionist is he who attempts to mould a child's character', the pioneers did not start pricking up their ears?"

As is well known, Shaw consistently refused to enter the House of Commons although politics was Shaw's primary concern. He refused constituency after constituency; and in a reply that he makes in the imaginary conversation, he says "Joad, who began as my disciple, throwing Darwin and Herbert Spencer, the leaders of advanced thought in the nineteenth century into the dustbin and banking on Butler and Bergson as the genuine evolutionists,

has blazed me off the stage as a popular philosopher and is actually a parliamentary candidate. This is not going from bad to worse but from bad to better, though I am deeply grieved to see my disciple suicidally wasting his invaluable time trying to get into an institution in which he will be extinguished by the property system and its party machine impregnably fortified by the votes of Tewler and Begonia. His proper political business is to unmask such mock democratic shame and make parliament a simple Duma to ventilate the grievances of Tewler and Begonia leaving qualified people to find the remedies. Our rulers must be chosen from the best class of qualified people who are divine and not picked up from the streets like coronor juries." The advice which Shaw gives Joad is worth weighing in gold. Ever since Plato, the best of mankind, whose judgment we should be prepared to trust and whose guidance we should be eager to solicit, have advised us in the same strain. On the one hand, ever since Plato, we have had continually dinned into our ears the lesson that it is only the sage, the Ethico-intellectual, the wise one, who could be trusted with the exercise of political power; on the other hand, we have witnessed down the ages the astounding phenomenon that political power has hardly, for any appreciable length of time in History, been wielded by the sages or the morally weighty personages.

In practical parlance, all that is required is that the real statesman should also be a thinker. A man with a knowing mind, a man whose ear is on the ground, is to be preferred at all events to the one who is animated solely by the desire for personal aggrandisement and show of power. The moral of Shaw's writings is to suggest that no progress is possible without 'right thinking', without a judicious consideration of all that could be said for and against any course of conduct which mankind wishes to follow. The age of blind faith, of authority, is over. The age of ratiocination, of realization has begun. And if mankind is to surmount the obstacles that have been thrown in its path it must, by a

method of "trial and error" discover, what it ought to do in order to evolve, and become better. Shaw regarded himself as a Philosopher of "Creative Evolution". He saw in the arena of History, the "Freedom of man" fighting against hostile forces, forces of inertia, of the dead weight of tradition. He came to believe that a man can, by an act of will, guided by intelligence, create a well-ordered and harmonious world.

The artist according to Shaw is an agent of the Creative Force: he prepares the ground for the inbreak of the spirit and for the onset of those values which we have been taught to realize by all higher religions and morality. Shaw would never have agreed to the slogan of 'Art for art's sake', a slogan which owed its vogue and popularity thanks to the advocacy of Oscar Wilde. With Shaw Art is strictly subservient to the ends that the creative evolution is pursuing.

Insistence on the qualities of alertness, of awareness, of precise knowledge is paramount in Shaw's writings. He is plainly opposed to all impulsive and irresponsible action. Every action in the social field, according to him, must be taken with a full sense of responsibility.

And now a word about his style. Shaw's style is a function of the "clarity" of his thought; he is not obsessed with the question of style; it is the content and not the form of his assertions that matters for him. His style is not the outcome of any set design but is the by-product of an effort to be clear and forceful.

The one quality which characterises his prose is its lucidity, directness, and precision. Each sentence is crystal clear and drives home the meaning it is intended to convey: each sentence is like the cut of a knife that reaches the very core of the problem. He himself says, "A true original style is never achieved for its own sake.... effectiveness of assertion is the alpha and omega of style. He who has nothing to assert has no style and can have none: He who has something to assert will go so far in power of

style as its momentousness and his conviction will carry. Disprove his assertion after it is made, yet his style remains."

He resorts to the dramatic technique of setting forth his ideas for two reasons. First, he is able to secure for his ideas effectualness by means of their concrete presentation on the stage: Secondly, he knows that it is only in conversation that the pros and cons of a debtable proposition are thrown into a bold belief. In this sense he uses the dialogue much in a manner in which Plato uses it in the Socratic discourses. But his mastery of dramatic technique notwithstanding—if Shaw atall lives, it will largely be due to the wisdom contained in the prefaces he wrote for these plays.

Therefore, on the whole, my opinion about his life's work is that he was a man of high and serious purposes. Even his role of a jester and a buffoon, a role which he sometimes designedly adopted, was calculated to minister to that master purpose of exposing the social ills that have been at war with the harmonies of human life. Even his frivolity is only a mask that hides his seriousness. If I were to sum up the value of his life in one word I would call it its "Earnestness".

Shaw is a creature of the age, He voices the demand of Creative Evolution: the demand that we should consciously become serviceable elements in the cosmic process. He is definitely not of "Eternity" in the sense in which Plato and Shakespeare are—but on that very account and for that very reason he is more serviceable to his immediate contemporaries. He does not scale the Olympian heights; he is not the eagle-eyed sage who surveys the totality of "Existence and its import". He is the creature of Twentieth Century circumstances, a favourite child of the time he came to serve. His message is therefore relevant only to those who are close to him in 'space and time'.

(1951)

As a Philosopher he (i.e. Ibn-Sina or Avecina) occupies a position hardly inferior to that of the great Stagyrite. He was unquestionably the master spirit of his age and in spite of the opposition raised against him by fanaticism and self-interest he left his impress in undying characters on the thoughts of succeeding ages. His voluminous works testify to the extraordinary activity of his mind. He systematised Aristotelian philosophy and filled "the void between God and Man" in Aristotle's fragmentary psychology by the doctrine of the intelligence of the spheres conceived after a scientific method.

SAYID AMEER ALI.

The Greek material received by the Arabs was not simply passed on by them to others who came after, it had a very real life and development in its Arabic surroundings. In Astronomy and mathematics the work of the Greek and Indian Scientists was co-ordinated and there a very real advance was made. It may be said that Algebra and both plane and spherical trigonometry were Arab Developments. The Arabs were diligent in making and recording astronomical observations and these not only extended what they had received from the Greeks but checked and corrected older records.

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AVICENNA

Avicenna (979-1037) is admittedly by far the greatest of Moslem philosophers and a physician in whom Arab medicine reached its highest culmination. He was born in the Province of Bokhara in the days of Nuh-bin-Mansoor. By the time he was ten years of age he had mastered the Holy Quran and a great deal of literature of his day: and even at that age he came to be admired for his precocious talents and aptitude for learning. *Bulkh*, which was the home town of Avicenna's father, today lies within the frontiers of Afghanistan although he himself is ranked as a Persian by descent.

It is significant that practically all the great Muslim philosophers did not belong to Arabia, nor had they Arab blood in their veins. Al-Kandi (died in 870), Al-Razi (died in 932), Al-Farabi (died in 950), Avicenna (died in 1037), Ghazali (1058-1111) and Ibn Rushd (died in 1198) were all non-Arabs. Al-Farabi belonged to Khorasan, Avicenna to Bokhara and Ghazali to the outlying Province of North-east Persia. Al-Kandi came from Basra on the Persian Gulf, that is, on the 'debatable ground between Semite and the Arya'. Ibn Rushd or Averoes, Ibn Tufail, Ibn Ba'aja were the products of Moorish Spain. The only reason why the philosophy propounded by these philosophers can be called Arab philosophy is that it was written in Arabic—but then, for the same reason, much of the modern philosophy of America, for instance, could also be called English philosophy simply because it has been written in the English language.

The early initiator of the philosophic education of Avicenna was a gentleman called Abu Abdullah Al-Netili who, at the instance of his father, actually stayed with him in his house. He was very much impressed by the versatile

and powerful mind of Avicenna and read with him some parts of Aristotle's logic and many other Greek texts. Avicenna also studied geometry. While still at the age of fourteen, as he tells us in his autobiography, he pursued further education in Greek thought, all by himself. He also, all by himself, pursued his own education in the natural sciences and metaphysics. He was deeply interested in medicine and in a very short time he acquired such a wealth of medical knowledge and its practice that even the qualified physicians of the day began to read medicine with him. He was then barely sixteen. For the next eighteen months he devoted himself to reading logic and philosophy. He tells us in his autobiography that whenever he was confronted with a problem he could not understand, he would repair to the mosque and pray until his problem was solved. At night he would return home, set the lamp before him and sit reading and writing. Even when sleep overtook him he would dream of the problems which he was considering when he fell asleep. Thus at the ripe age of 50 he was able to say of what he acquired at 18, "All that I learnt during the time is exactly as I know it now, I have added nothing more to my knowledge to this day." The rest of his life was taken up in the service of the Princes on whom he attended as a physician, and in whose courts he became the centre of intellectual activity. He tells us in his autobiography that he found it very difficult to follow *metaphysica* of Aristotle; he had read it over forty times, but he was not able to understand it. One day, however, he chanced to be in a book-sellers' quarter when a broker turned up with a volume in his hand which he was offering for sale. The owner of the book was in need of money and was prepared to sell it for four *dirhams*. It was a book by Abu Nasir Al-Farabi "On the Objects of Metaphysica". He bought the book and read it. He understood the Philosophy of Aristotle from that book. He rejoiced at this conquest and next day distributed alms to the poor as a token of his gratitude to the Almighty—

he, as a Muslim, believed that all knowledge comes from God and that He is the best of helpers.

The historical role of Muslim Philosophy in general and that of Avicenna in particular has not, as yet, been properly appreciated in the Modern West. A writer on "Arabian Philosophy" in the Encyclopædia Britanica says in the very opening paragraph of his article—

"What is known as Arabian Philosophy owed to Arabia little more than its name and its language. It was a system of Greek Thought, expressed in Semitic tongue and modified by oriental influence called into existence amongst the Moslem People by the patronage of their more liberal princes and kept alive by the intrepidity and zeal of a small band of thinkers who stood suspected and disliked in the eyes of their nation. Their chief claim to notice of the historian of philosophy comes from their warm reception of the Greek Philosophy when it had been banished from its original soil and whilst western Europe was still too rude and ignorant to be its home (9th to 12th century)."

This, I must say, is a dubious compliment to Moslems in general and to Moslem Philosophers in particular. That Greek Philosophy dominated Muslim thought of the tenth century cannot be regarded as a disparagement of the latter, for the simple reason that, even the modern thought and philosophy of the West is admittedly still dominated by it. Mr. C. E. M. Joad, for instance, claims that the whole of European Philosophy may be described as being in the nature of foot-notes to and a commentary on, the Philosophy of Plato. Accordingly the fact of this type of domination is hardly a point which can be charged against the Muslim Thought. It is true that the Muslims familiarised the Western World with the treasures of Greek Thought but it is also true that they did not stop there—they made a substantial contribution to it, as they did to almost every other branch of human learning of their day.

The intellectual ancestry of the modern world and the decisive influence which has shaped it, namely, science and scientific method, have not, I am afraid, been adequately analysed and understood. "So thoroughly," says Dr. Robert Briffault, "have the traditional misconceptions and persistent misrepresentations falsified our perspective of history that even the best of the modern educated European or American is only a few degrees removed from ignorance." It is assumed, for instance, that the 'dark age' of Europe which had paralysed human progress represents that period of history which followed the fall of the Graeco-Roman phase of civilization and continued right up to the close of the thirteenth century. European Scholars have applied the term "Renaissance" to include the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is undoubtedly true, as remarked by the same writer, that the culture of these two centuries was but the ripe fruit of an antecedent growth, a fruit not only ripe but in many respects completely rotten. But it is not realised, however, that that civilisation itself grew out of the contribution that Musalman thinkers, scientists, historians and statesmen made to the liberation of Europe between the 10th and 12th centuries. It is hardly realised that the fall of Graeco-Roman civilisation was not the result of any drastic blow such as the one which wiped out Babylon or Assyria, but was itself a leisurely process. This period was ultimately succeeded by an age of appalling darkness and savagery for the like of which there is no parallel in the whole range of human history. From the fifth to the 10th century "Europe lay sunk in a night of barbarism which grew darker and darker". In the words of Dr. Robert Briffault—

"The depth of that ruin is not generally realised in its full horror. The records of the period are eked out with the names of barbarian chiefs and their wars, and do not dwell on the picture of the existing world. By an optical illusion the light that shines before and after tends to diffuse

over the dark gap. From the fifth to the tenth century Europe lay sunk in a night of barbarism which grew darker and darker. It was a barbarism far more awful and horrible than that of the primitive savage, for it was the decomposing body of what had been a great civilisation. The features and impress of that civilization were all but completely effaced. Where its development had been fullest, in Italy and in Gaul, all was ruin, squalor, desolation. The land had dropped out of cultivation; trees and shrubs rapidly encroached upon the once cultivated land, rivers overflowed their broken and neglected banks; the forest and the malarial swamp regained their sway over vast tracts of country which had been covered with prosperous farms and waving fields. . . Famines and plagues were chronic; there were ten devastating famines and thirteen plagues in the course of the tenth century alone. Cases of cannibalism were not uncommon; there were man-hunts, not with a view to plunder, but for food; it is on record that at Tournus, on the Saone, human flesh was publicly put up for sale. It was impossible to venture abroad without a strong armed escort; robber bands roamed everywhere. Water traffic was put a stop to by the practice of wrecking, which was actually encouraged by charters. Anarchy was absolute and unchecked; there was no law but the arbitrary will of the barons and their men-at-arms; none had power to check them. They lived in their towers in rush-strewn halls, which frequently served also as stables for their horses. They had no other occupation but brigandage, private wars, and riot."

The Question then arises how did European Civilisation ultimately emerge anew out of that abyss of darkness and desolation. The question has been raised, but, as was only to be expected from European historians, the only answer they could give was that somehow, all of a sudden, as if from 'nowhere' the light of the 'Renaissance' burst forth upon a dark and demoralised world. Not only that, but the height of perversity of their historical judgment can

be gauged from this that, far from acknowledging that this was the result of the liberating light of Islam and Musalman thinkers, it has been asserted over and over again that the Renaissance itself is attributable to the recovery of the writings of the ancient Greeks after the fall of Constantinople. But it is forgotten that: "It is impossible without intellectual light of some kind coming from somewhere to explain the miracle which admittedly did take place. No extant elements derived either from the rigid conservative structure of the Roman Empire or from the dogmatic search could give rise to a progressive civilisation in the Europe of dark ages any more than did those same elements in the Empire of Byzantium."

The explanation for the emergence of this new civilisation is to be found in what Islam and the Musalmans did for Europe during the 10th, 11th and 12th centuries; and in this light that came from elsewhere a star of the first magnitude is the sage, philosopher and physician Avicenna,—to commemorate whose memory we have assembled here this evening. It was the Dar-ul-Hikmat of the Musalmans that awakened Europe from its deep slumber. The Abbasid Princes became the founders of Islamic culture. Learning flourished in the Courts of the Kings. The intellectuals all over India and China flocked to the land of Islam where alone toleration prevailed. The Abbasid Caliphs were the pioneer builders of the civilisation of Islam. They regarded themselves as the most useful servants of God; as men, whose lives were devoted to the improvement of the rational faculties of man. "It was under the influence of the Arabian and Moorish revival of culture and not in the 15th century that real renaissance took place. Spain and not Italy was the cradle of the birth of Europe." Bagdad, Cairo, Cardoba, Toledo became the centres of civilisation and intellectual activities. In the words of the same writer—

"The fact has been set forth again and again. But it has been nevertheless stubbornly ignored and persistently minimized. The debt of Europe to the 'heathen dog'

could, of course, find no place in the scheme of Christian history, and the garbled falsification has imposed itself on all subsequent conceptions. Even Gibbon treated Islam depreciatingly, an instance of the power of conventional tradition upon its keenest opponent. Until the last century there did not even exist anything approaching accurate knowledge of Saracenic history and culture. "Those accounts of Mahomet and Islam which were published in Europe before the beginning of the nineteenth century are now to be regarded simply as Literary curiosities." (Professor Bevan). At the present day, when wider and more exact knowledge is becoming accessible, scarcely any history of the Middle Ages gives Islamic culture more than cursory and patronizing recognition. The history of the re-emergence of Europe from barbarism is constantly being written without any reference whatsoever, (except to mention "the triumphs of the Cross over the Crescent", and "the reclamation of Spain from Moorish yoke") to the influence of Arab civilisation—the history of the Prince of Denmark without Hamlet. Dr. Osborn Taylor has even achieved the feat of writing two large volumes on the development of the Mediaeval Mind without betraying by a hint the existence of Muhammadan culture.

"That a brilliant and energetic civilisation full of creative energy should have existed side by side and in constant relation with populations sunk in barbarism, without exercising a profound and vital influence upon their development, would be a manifest anomaly. That no such suspension of natural law was involved in the relation between Islam and Europe, is abundantly attested in spite of the conspiring of every circumstance to suppress, deform, and obliterate the records of that relation. Its extent and importance have been beyond doubt far greater than it is today possible to demonstrate in detail. Like the geological record of extinct life, our knowledge in the matter is derived from the scattered and accidentally preserved fragments of evidenee which have been spared by

forces universally tending to blot them out. When those conditions, when the obliteration of evidence, its distortion, the persistent prejudice and misrepresentation which fastens upon every single fact, are borne in mind, there can be no doubt that our estimate of that influence must err on the side of under-, rather than of over-estimation. It is highly probable that but for the Arabs modern European civilisation would never have arisen at all; it is absolutely certain that but for them, it would not have assumed that character which has enabled it to transcend all previous phases of evolution. For although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the paramount distinctive force of the modern world and the supreme source of its victory—natural science and the scientific spirit."

I have quoted these passages to you from Dr. Briffault's book *The Making of Humanity*. But there are other books also which corroborate the main point of my argument, and if I have not taxed your patience by citing these it is only because, I want you to go through those books in an attempt to reconstruct for yourselves the real facts on which a proper historical judgment of the value of Muslim Thought can be based.

And now finally as to the charge of lack of originality made against Muslim philosophers: I would like to take up only one of the predominant ideas of Avicenna and show to what extent, if at all, his philosophy can be said to be a mere reflex of ancient Greeks philosophy. The philosophical doctrine I propose to deal with is no other than the main thesis of the philosophy of Avicenna—his doctrine of the *Necessary* and *Possible* Being. This conception of his has apparently no precedent for it in Greek philosophy; and at least Averroes who knew better so understood it.

According to Avicenna, we possess an *intuitive notion* of the reality of the Necessary Being and we realize

directly and immediately the objective truth of its existence. It is unthinkable that the necessary being should not exist. We realize immediately that it is impossible to think that the Necessary Being does not exist: in fact, this realization is the same as the one which compels us to think consistently —just as we cannot think in respect of contradictory concepts that both of them can be and not be; so also, it is impossible to think that a Necessary Being does not exist. This Necessary Being is not the result of the process of *ratiocination*. It is not even the result of predicating ontological validity of the *idea* of a Necessary Being. This Necessary Being cannot be proved or argued about. It is an intuitive notion which can neither be *explained* nor demonstrated. It is merely to be *acknowledged*.

As to the description of other beings in the world other than the Necessary Being, Avicenna observes that all sub-luminary beings either taken together or singly may not exist. The process of thought that abolishes the existence of beings in the world involves us in no contradiction. That is why he says that these beings are only possible; they may or may not exist. The second observation that Avicenna makes is that about the Possible Beings: the beings that in fact thus exist, that is, the beings that are real and true, are the effects of this Necessary Being. The reason of their existence cannot reside in themselves since according to the very definition they are only possible. The reason for their existence therefore must be found in the Necessary Being.

If we analyse the process of thought which underlies Avicenna's thesis it would appear that we are more or less conducted by the same manner of approach to that "metaphysical doubt" which is to be found in the philosophy of Descartes. It would be recalled that Descartes (following, if not copying, Al-Ghazali's manner of approach) started by doubting every data of experience, whether it be referable to things in the external world by perceptive process or through the deliverance of introspection to the thought

processes and their product. But in the process of doubting the reality of all this experience, he was led to assume the existence of the self that doubts. He claimed that he had an *intuitive notion of himself as a thinking being* the moment he began to doubt the validity of all that he perceived. The doubt implied the reality of doubter and so he arrived at the argument: '*cogito, ergo sum*',—I think therefore I am. Avicenna not only affirms all that Descartes established seven centuries later, "but if we analyse his conception further," says J. L. Teicher, "it would appear that his doctrine of the "Necessary and Possible Being" over and above postulating the metaphysical doubt of Descartes, the intuitive notion of the thinking self and the idea of God as the necessary cause of the reality of beings, *also laid the foundation for explaining the possibility of historical, biological or psychological evolution.*"

In order to explain the latter thought further we ought, to begin with, to contrast the concept of being "possible in itself" as applied to beings other than the Necessary Being. The concept of "possible being" is not the same as the concept of *potentiality* as opposed to *actuality* in the Aristotelian sense. In fact the "possible being" is also the "actual being" necessarily existent, as has been explained earlier, through their connection with the Necessary Being. To say all this is to imply that the actual and the real may not exist, that is, they are contingent or free, not determined by antecedent causes, for otherwise they would cease to be possible. They are in a certain sense new creations. Nevertheless, they are assumed by Avicenna to be determined since their existence is the effect of the Necessary Being. Logically you cannot reconcile both the conceptions of "possible beings" being *determined in a sense and yet not determined*. But are they not all the same involved in the perception of all historical, biological or psychological evolution? Thus only *intuition* reveals the true nature of reality which, in the Bergsonian sense of that term; is 'creative evolution'. The act of intuition apprehending the

Necessary Being is not restricted only to the Necessary Being itself since it apprehends at the same time the "possible beings" too. Thus in a single and individual act of intuition one sees Necessary and Possiblè Beings together in which reality becomes a process of *derivation*, of *creativity* and of *emergence*. Says J. L. Teicher, on this aspect of Avicenna's philosophy—

"A confirmation of the contention that Avicenna introduced into Arabic Philosophy the notion of reality as a creative evolution disguised under the cloak of the cumbersome formula of the Necessary and Possible Being may be found in the fact that the notions of duration and evolution in the Bergsonian sense were clearly formulated by an Arabic and a Jewish Philosopher, Averroes and Maimonides who both derived their inspiration from Avicenna's work."

The foregoing discussion amply vindicates the claim that the philosophy of Avicenna is not merely an interpretation or a re-statement of the philosophy of Aristotle and that even in its basic and predominant ideas it not only goes much further than the philosophy of Aristotle in particular and of the Greeks in general, but it contains many fruitful ideas and ingenious theories.

Let me read out to you the words of Roger Bacon in an attempt to convey to you what, an admirer and a devoted follower of Avicenna, had to say about the comparative value of the philosophy of Aristotle and of the later Muslim philosophers:—

"Aristotle . . . purged away the errors of proceeding philosophers, and enlarged philosophy, aspiring to that full measure of this subject possessed by the ancient patriarches, although he was not able to perfect each of its parts. For his successors have corrected him in some particulars, and have added many things to his works, and additions will continue to be made until the end of the world, because there is no perfection in human discoveries. . . But the larger portion of the philosophy of Artistotle received little attention either on account of the concealment

of the copies of his work and their rarity, or on account of their difficulty, or unpopularity, or on account of the wars in the East, till after the time of Mohomet, when Avicenna, Averroes and others recalled it to the light of full exposition. Although some of his works on logic and certain others have been translated from Greek by Boethius, yet from the time of Michael Scot, whose translations with authentic expositions of certain parts of Aristotle's works on nature and metaphysics appeared in the year of our Lord 1230, the philosophy of Aristotle has grown in importance among the Latins. But in comparison with the vastness of his wisdom contained in a thousand books, only a very small portion up to the present time has been translated into Latin, and still less is in common use among students. Avicenna in particular, the imitator and expositor of Aristotle, and the man who completed philosophy as far as it was possible for him to do so, composed a threefold volume on philosophy."

There are several other aspects of the life and work of Avicenna to which I have not the time at my disposal to make a reference. He is the first man to perfect the empirical method and to apply it with considerable advantage to the study of medicine. His investigations in the field of the physiology of the human system are remarkable in many ways and have evoked the admiration of later generations of students of medicine. His writings on chemistry and geology, if read with sympathy, would show his amazing power of observation and analysis. He was equally at home in the science of physics and mechanics, and his theory of the movement of projectiles is well-known. On the best evidence it appears that Galileo only succeeded, as if only by an intellectual twist, in exploiting Avicenna's attempt to solve the problem of the movement of projectiles and elaborated it into the theory of inertial motion on which 17th century mechanics rests. He wrote on almost every conceivable subject not excluding music. "In the history of musical technique," says A. C. Crombie, "Avicenna is

interesting for his account of 'organising' the earliest form of harmony and mensural music in which instead of fluid time values persisting, for example, in plainchant, the durations of the notes have an exact ratio among themselves. He was interested in therapeutic value of music and in the effect of different compositions on our mood."

In short Avicenna had a universal outlook. He appropriated the whole field of knowledge as his province of study, and there is hardly a branch of human learning of his day which he did not master and, having mastered, did not improve upon and advance.

1953

[Being the substance of a Speech delivered before the U. S. I. Centre, Karachi.]

Might must be at the Service of the Right, and not Right at the mercy of might.

VICTOR COUSIN.

* * * *

Starting from liberty as the fundamental basis of law, Islamic jurists have reached a twofold conclusion:

1. Liberty finds its limit in its very nature, because liberty unlimited would mean self-destruction—and that limit or boundary is the legal norm, or Law.

2. No limit is arbitrary, because it is determined by its utility or the greatest good of the individual or of society. Utility, which is the foundation of law, traces also its boundary and extent.

A cursory review of the various legal institutions may be of some help towards realizing the practical bearing of these principles. As God's vicar upon earth, man is endowed with a personality making him susceptible both of rights and duties: chief amongst these is the right of man as an individual to personal safety and freedom.

D. De SANTILLANA.

* * * *

That is the paradox of self-government. Certain restraints upon freedom add to a man's happiness. Partly, they save him from the difficulty of going back to first principles for every step he has to take; they summarize for him the past experience of the community. Partly, also, they prevent every opposition of desire from resulting in conflict; they thus assure him of security. In a sense, he is like a traveller who reaches a sign-post pointing in many directions. Law helps him by telling him where one, at least, will lead; and it invites him to assume that its direction is also, or should be, his destination.

HAROLD J. LASKI.

* * * *

A ceaseless struggle and a living aspiration are necessary to scale a moral height

EARL BALDWIN.

PAKISTAN AND THE LIBERAL TRADITION

In what follows, I shall attempt to set forth the elements of the political creed which goes by the name of Liberalism, and show that "liberalism" regarded as a movement of thought and action has, as a matter of fact, dominated recent European history. As I hold that Liberalism itself is the direct contribution of Islam to the western world, I shall state as precisely as I can, the case for the adoption and perpetuation of the liberal tradition in Pakistani politics and sociology. I believe that unless we consciously plan and regulate the affairs of the New State in the light of the ideals which Islam presents to us, we shall not be able to occupy an honourable place in the comity of Nations.

All writers on politics and sociology have experienced difficulty in formulating the relationship that *ought* to exist in any civilized State between the individual and the State. At the out set mention may be made of the two possible ways in which this relationship could be conceived in theory. If the superiority and the relative importance of the State over the individual is upheld, we have in politics, the authoritarian or the totalitarian State; if, on the other hand, we regard the individual as subsisting in his own right and in no way subservient to the dictates of society in matters where his obedience to these dictates entails an undue delimitation of his personality or freedom, then we have, what I call, the individualistic social order. Now, the history of the political emancipation of the masses, from the tyranny of slavery and bondage in which they have been held in the past, as a result of the prevalance of the authoritarian order, and their elevation to their present level of political dominance shows, that the change in their political status has steadily been brought about by the operation of certain

well-defined liberalising forces, the precise nature of which I shall have occasion to advert a little later. Liberalism, in its beginning, appears as a "criticism" of the authoritarian order. The post-Renaissance period of modern history familiarises us with this phenomenon: the fight for liberty is everywhere in evidence. After the Renaissance, with improvements in means of communications, of the arts of life, of education, the locus of political power in each State began to shift and by a process of steady evolution it has now come to be concentrated in the lower strata of society. The general level of the masses appears to be rising everywhere. The emergence of modern States after the crumbling of the ecclesiastial Power brought about the widening of the political base, that is, the democratisation of the social order. This, in its turn, led to the growth of civil independence; the fight for personal freedom became possible. People who were smarting under the staggering weight of arbitrary rule, nations that were held in bondage to the conquering race, industrial enterprise which had been clogged and obstructed by social privilege, or crippled by unconscionable taxation, were emancipated. This liberation from the yoke of tyranny was the result of the operations of various forces and factors that 'removed all super-incumbent weights and cleared away all obstructions.' In the 19th century Europe liberalism came into its own. With the discovery of the biological hypothesis of the continuity of creation, with the advent of the industrial revolution, with the perception of the wider world of truth now made accessible to mankind, thanks to the progress of scientific education, mankind saw, in the political field, the enunciation of the doctrine of political liberty. Representative government became possible, nay inevitable. Liberty of all kinds—civic, political, personal, social and economic—became the watchword of nineteenth century humanists. The doctrine of religious liberty also came to be recognized; the gospel of tolerance came to be practised, for the first time I sup-

pose, as a *virtue*, with the Christian Powers. In short, this revolution that over-took European history was the result of the humanising influence of liberalism. Liberalism became an all-pervading element in the life of the modern man. It became an effective historical force.

Now whence came this dispensation? How shall we trace its history beyond the point of time at which we note its appearance in European politics? Its origins cannot be traced to the Bible. It is no answer to the question raised here to say that liberalism was brought about by the advancement of learning, the growth of man's knowledge, the discovery of the art of printing, or for that matter, by the free circulation of books. These facts do not account for the phenomenon we wish to study. These facts themselves have to be explained. Why is it that there was a spread of education, an expansion of our knowledge, of the release of the power of rational thought, as against soul-crushing weight of dead tradition and the crippling tyranny of dogmatic authority? Various European scholars have asked this question and some of them have correctly suggested the answer.

The Liberal tradition owes its emergence to the Quranic teaching. All modern values like the importance of mass-education, the dignity of labour, the equality of mankind, the emancipation of woman from the bondage in which she found herself as a result of the prevalance of inhuman matrimonial and inheritance laws, are emphasised and elucidated for the first time, with characteristic precision, in the Quoran. This Book begins with the imperative "*Read*"; its second verse begins with the words "*The ink and the pen and what they shall write*" and the Book throughout extols and emphasizes the ideals of justice, of the brotherhood of man, of the virtue of self-control. The ideas of historical research, as even of the methods of experiment and observation were suggested for the first time by the Quoran. For the first time, in the history of man's religious development, we find Quoran Commanding

man to open wide his eyes to see if he can detect a flaw in the world of creation*. He was commanded *to think* and to *rationalise* and the last court of appeal where it was to be decided whether a particular proposition was true was the authority of reason. Again, for the first time, *tolerance* became a religious command; to respect all Prophets and all the religious Books, and not to discriminate between any of them, is not only commanded as a virtue to be practised by a Muslim but is religious duty to be done.

And then, have not those very progressive forces that have shaped the modern world, themselves been released by the teachings of the Quran? Men could begin to question the foundation of authority only because they were ordained to *think*, and not take things on authority. Rousseau writes his Social Contract and ushers in an era of Government by consent. The democratic movement stimulated by the French Revolution, the political philosophy of the Benthamite school, the teachings of economists who developed the ideas of Adam Smith—all these thought currents were released by the Quran.

The Quran emphasises ethical values: it says that righteous conduct is the standard of excellence to which man has to conform if he is to be saved. One of the highest duties assigned to man is to walk on what the Quran describes as the Higher Path; and in a chapter of the Quran entitled "*Al-Balad*" after drawing the attention of man to the fact that he has been given eyes to see, two lips and a tongue to talk with and the two ways to walk upon, the 'Voice of Truth' with characteristic artistic excellence, asks, "And what shall tell you, in what the higher way consists", and proceeds to answer the question without waiting for an answer: "It consists in *freeing the slave* or in the *giving of*

*Chap. 67. *vs.* 34 of the Quoran—
. . . . Do you see any incongruity in the Creation of the Merciful or Beneficent Power; then look again, can you see any flaw (or disorder). Then throw back the glance (or eye) again and again: your look shall come back confused and fatigued (but you shall not detect any flow. . . .).

the food in a day of privation to the orphan with the claim of relationship, or to the indigent who is in the *dust.*" Now let us *analyse* the answer and reflect: what does the duty of freeing the slave mean? Slavery is of all types and varies in its manifestation from age to age. Even in the present age, when the penal laws have prohibited slavery, slavery of the very worst kind is still in evidence everywhere. In the modern age, it goes by the name of 'exploitation': exploitation of labour by capital, of one country by another, of one class of society by another. The process of 'exploitation' is imperceptible and subtle but its essentials can be grasped and its tactical principle can be formulated. Everywhere exploitation takes the shape *of taking unfair advantage of some one's helplessness.* Now the Quran commands that this is an evil to be eradicated. Let none be a slave to another. Everyone of us should be made free, so that each one of us may freely surrender himself at the altar of the Universal Power. No man can worship the 'God of the Universe' freely and therefore genuinely, unless he is himself free. The Quran further points out that there is a kind of slavery in which the *best* in man is obstructed by the *worst* in him. Man is a slave of passions and continually worships them, as though they were his 'god's, says the Quran. Anybody who can help another to free himself from the grip of those base passions is doing one of the highest duties he is commanded to do. An ignorant man is the very worst of slaves for he is the most helpless of all. How shall a man walk freely on the "straight path" if he is not *free* from *ignorance*, from *poverty* and from *want*?

Then the Quran enjoins the duty of feeding orphans, of helping those 'who are in the dust'; in other words it imposes an unqualified and imperative duty on each one of us to provide for the sustenance and upkeep of our fellowmen. In these words you have not only the foundation but the rationale of "economic equality" and "social justice"—those very elements of contemporary social

theory on which so much emphasis is being laid in the modern world.

In what I have said above, I have indicated that the decisive liberating influences of the modern world and the values it prizes have been *released* by the teaching of Islam as it is embodied in the Quran. These *values* were recognised for the first time by the Quran: pre-Islamic History had no place for them. The verdict of history is quite clear on this issue.

In any Muslim State therefore, the primary emphasis has to be given on these values: *e.g.*, the liberty of the individual, his right to hold any opinion he entertains and his right to seek in concert with his fellow men the realization of that opinion. We cannot forget the basic fact that ultimately it is the individual who is accountable to God: the State is the mere means whereby the individual is enabled to realise all the potentialities that are dormant in him. There is no place in a Muslim State for a creed which emphasises the relative unreality of the individual and calls upon him to sacrifice his moral manhood, or spiritual heritage and destiny at the altar of the arbitrary will of State. It is the individual and not the State which is accountable to God.

If there is any antithesis between "personal freedom" and the "necessity of social control" that has to be resolved by a wise and judicious legislation; a dominant factor in this decision always being the consideration that if there is at all a place for "state control" it is only because personal freedom in its absence would not be possible. Personal freedom has to be limited in order that the "other " fellow men may also enjoy their measure of freedom. Liberty, as has been said, is primarily a matter of social interest, as something flowing from the necessity of continuous advance in those regions of Truth and morals which constitute the matters of highest social concern. The relationship between the individual and the State cannot be grasped in terms of mechanics, but can only be comprehended by

resorting to the use of biological categories. The individual is organic to society. Both of them are necessary to each other. The individual alone is the bearer of the value; it is he who *thinks*, who *acts*, who *suffers*; the State is the mere canvas of a background against which individual existence acquires meaning or significance. The moral of all these abstract considerations is that in Pakistan, which claims to be a Muslim State, there can be *no place for the formation of a totalitarian order*, and it is not a place where one should be allowed to bring about cultural, linguistic or ideological regimentation. Differences in the opinion of my followers, so taught Muhammad, are a sign of their health. The *collective life of the* State does not necessarily proceed by coercion or restraint. The more securely the government of a State is founded on freedom and a general willing assent, the more free it is to work out all the achievements in which the individual is feeble and powerless while combined action is strong. "Human progress," says L. T. Hobhouse, "on whatever side we consider it, is found to be in the main *social* progress, the work of conscious or unconscious co-operation." In this work, voluntary association plays a large and necessary part, and the State is merely *one* form of association among others and is distinguished only by its use of coercive power, by its supremacy and by its claim to control all who dwell within its geographical limits. The functions of that form of association are many: but where it comes into conflict with the interests of individual life, when coercion and force are employed to enslave the individual, to belittle and degrade him to the life of the unthinking beast, the sanctity of individual life demands that the individual should be *permitted* to object to this undesirable encroachment on his personal life.

That brings me to the discussion of the *means* by resort to which the individual is *permitted* to safeguard the interests of individual life. Liberalism does not believe in "Revolution" in the militant attitude of the masses to rise against the tyranny of the central State power.

The method of liberalism is the method of democracy; and the instrument of its action is the application of *organised intelligence* for the settlement of conflicting claims between the State and the individual or between the groups of individuals *inter se*. 'The more the respective claims of the two are publicly and scientifically viewed, the more likely is it that public interests will be disclosed and be made effective.' Violence, the use of force, and the revolt of one class against another within the State can have no place in a Muslim State.

The argument drawn from history that great social changes have been effected only by violent means, needs considerable qualification in view of the vast changes that are seen taking place today without the use of violence. Whatever may have happened in the past, the future method of effectuating a change must be grounded on facts as they appear today. The modern State, backed as it is, by the might of scientifically equipped military power, is not the weak form of association it used to be in the past. Despite the success of the Russian Revolution and the advocacy of that method by the Communists, no revolution of the kind envisaged by the Marxists has taken place in any other country of the world. Any such civil or political strife within the State cannot be initiated to-day for the fear that it will bring about the ruin of all parties, thanks to the increased destructiveness of modern methods of warfare. It is this view of the facts of contemporary life that renders it imperative that the alternative that is suggested here be examined and applied. The elimination or resolution of social conflicts is possible today only by the method of liberal democracy, a method whereby these conflicts are brought out into the *open*, 'where their special claim can be seen, and appraised, and where they can be discussed and judged in the light of the more inclusive interests that are represented by either of them separately.'

Whatever has been achieved in the past as a result of the employment of violent means has never been in the

nature of unalloyed or pure gain to humanity. No revolution has succeeded in establishing those ideals and that way of life for which it was held to be a justifiable means. This is so because all violence is ultimately something that is evil and cannot be productive of aught save evil.

There are, says John Dewey somewhere, in the end only two alternatives before us; firstly, of continuation of drift, with attendant improvisation to meet special emergencies depending upon *violence*, and secondly, our dependence upon the socially organised intelligence. Already socially organised action is liberating the individual from the grip of environmental necessity that has kept him, so far, tied to the earth.

Nor is "Social Control" in any real sense a negation of the free exercise of individual energy or initiative. Recent legislation has familiarised us with the measures that are being taken by modern states to take over the performance of social services as a duty in addition to the older functions of Government. The value of achievement in this direction is not to be despised. The public mind has to be educated and made to realise the possibilities of organised social control. 'But this is all consistent with the maintenance of the liberty of the individual, for, the ultimate function of economic organisation in human life is to assure the secured basis for a well ordered expression of an individual's capacity and for the satisfaction of the needs of man in non-economic directions.' It is this socially organised phase of life that provides a durable basis for the realisation of the values of intellectual, aesthetic and compassioned life. All material improvement in the end is instrumental in the promotion of the good life. 'The transfer of the burden of material production from human muscles and brain to steam, electricity, chemical processes or mechanical appliances', ultimately means the liberation of the individual from having to serve pressing needs of life, so that he may effectively actualise the ideal of his being. All the fruits of science, which mastery over the power of

nature has yielded to us, have emancipated man so that he may look heavenwards and be not be lost for ever in earthly pursuits. Thus even the socialised economy of modern times is the means, of free individual development, as the end.

To sum up: Liberalism is a belief in the value of human personality, and a conviction that the source of all progress lies in the free exercise of individual energy; it produces an eagerness to emancipate all individuals or groups, so that they may fairly exercise their powers in so far as this can be done without injury to others; and it therefore involves a readiness to use the power of the State for the purpose of creating conditions within which the individual can thrive, of preventing all abuses of power, of affording to every citizen the means of acquiring mastery of his own capacities, of establishing a real equality of opportunity for all; these aims are compatible with a very active policy of social organisation involving a great enlargement of the functions of the State. Thus Liberalism as a code of belief and behaviour enjoins ceaseless endeavour on the part of man to fight against the forces of ignorance and poverty, ill-health and suffering. Hitherto it has had to reckon with the forces of conservative bigotry, of intolerance and of tyranny. Now its duty is clear: to be eternal vigilant. *Liberalism*, ideologically regarded, yields to us a fully worked out creed which is in accord with, nay is the result of, the acceptance of the principles of individual and social action which the Quran was the first to introduce into the history of mankind. There is no reason then why liberalism may not find its Renaissance in Pakistan or why it should not flower out in this new State and yield to us a working philosophy of social life. . .

1948:

[Annual Number of 'Dawn'.]

The spiritual essence of a national life may exist without the members of a nation being aware of its presence. National consciousness, it is true, is a spark more readily kindled by the intimacies and the contacts of daily life than the consciousness either of racial or of linguistic groups. But it is possible for nations, too, to exist, and even to exist for centuries, in unreflective silence. This is true in a double sense. You may have a nation without its members being aware of their peculiar nationality as a fact or a feeling which distinguishes them from other nations. Here there is an absence of the sense of nationality. Again, and still more, you may have a nation without its members being seized by the idea of nationality as the one cardinal principle on which their life, and that of other nations, ought to be organized and developed. Here there is an absence of the passion of nationalism. A sense of nationality and a passion of nationalism are different things. The one may be felt, and is likely to be felt, before the other. But both may be posterior to the fact of nationality.

SIR ERNEST BARKER.

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For the present every Muslim nation must sink into her own deeper self, temporarily focus her vision on herself alone, until all are strong and powerful to form a living family of republics. A true and living unity, according to the nationalist thinkers, is not so easy as to be achieved by a merely symbolical overlordship. It is truly manifested in a multiplicity of free independent units whose racial rivalries are adjusted and harmonized by the unifying bond of a common spiritual aspiration. It seems to me that God is slowly bringing home to us the truth that Islam is neither Nationalism nor Imperialism but a League of Nations which recongnizes artificial boundaries and racial distinctions for facility of reference only, and not for restricting the social horizon of its members.

SIR MOHAMMAD IQBAL.

THE NEW STATE AND THE PROBLEM OF ITS NATIONAL CHARACTER

With the passing of the Indian Independence Act, 1947, the British Parliament launched into existence the New State of Pakistan purely as a 'Juridical entity'. It is true that that enactment was itself the result of the recognition of a long-felt demand that was made on the will and the conscience of the Imperialist rulers of undivided India, that the Indian Muslims constituted a separate nation, and therefore had, in the exercise of the right of self-determination, every claim to be constituted as a separate State.

The partition of the Indian sub-continent into the two States of the Indian Union and Pakistan followed the principle of securing grouping of the two communities into two separate, sovereign and independent States: areas where Muslims were in a majority were allotted to Pakistan and the rest remained with the Indian Union. This mode of creating States is an experiment of the twentieth century, and there is not the remotest parallel for it in History. In the realistic sense, there was no such thing as a 'Muslim Nation' because it had no territory to call its own: there was, at best, only a disembodied National ego that was clamouring for a place to call its own. After the creation of Pakistan as a juridical entity the problem still remains the same: the territory now known as Pakistan is not, strictly speaking, as yet, a nation; it has not yet developed a national spirit or a national character: the mere geographical contiguity of men, who wish to live in some sort of a common economic and political set-up, cannot constitute anything remotely resembling a nation.

Several factors enter into the making of a nation. Some of these are more decisive than others; and these factors

speaking broadly, are divisible into two main categories: the material and the spiritual. The material factors provide the base or the sub-stratum on which spiritual forces and influences operate to create a living synthesis embodied in the national consciousness of a given people. According to Ernest Barker the important factors that foster the growth of National Character are :—

(a) the genetic factor, or the common blood in a given people, who are descended from a common stock and represent a racial unity;

(b) the geographical factor, which connotes the idea of having common frontiers, common territory, and may be comprehensively termed as the common environment of a given people;

(c) the economic factor; and under this category are subsumed questions concerning the population and the occupation of a given people and the means of its subsistence. This factor cannot be regarded as falling either exclusively into the material or spiritual category, but must be regarded as covering an intervening ground as it constitutes a halfway house, which lies between the *purely material* factors of race and environment and the *purely spiritual* and cultural factors like the law and Government, language and literature, religion and education;

(d) the political factor; and by this is meant the type of polity under which a given people lives. It is pretty obvious that the law and the constitution under which a given people lives are the creation of the human mind: the political and constitutional structure is after all a mere projection on the canvas of history of the ideas of the people. Savigny, a German jurist, defined law as "the organ of the folk-right" as he regarded it as something which naturally grew from a sense of right inherent in a community. Hegel, in his "Phenomenology of the Mind" refused to accept the position that constitutions were ever made. He observed "What is called the *making of a constitution* is a thing that has never happened in history. A

constitution only develops from the national spirit identically with that spirit's own development". As we shall see later on, this position is not entirely correct and in particular it is untrue of a historical phenomenon where, by a legislative enactment, a state can be created and its citizens then allowed to frame their own constitution for their future governance. The Hegelian dictum, in a sense, however, would be true even in the case of a legalistic creation of a new state, such as Pakistan, because the constitution is afterall written by individual men and to that extent, once again, the constitution that is framed would reflect the native genius of the community from where the legislators are drawn;

(e) the religious, and

(f) finally the cultural (language, literatures and arts) and the educational factors; factors which represent, as will be argued later, the masculine spirit of history, as they are the factors that fecundate and fructify and control, the materialistic forces of history.

Of the several factors that enter into the making of a nation, the primary emphasis must be laid upon the Human factor. According to Renan, a nation is an embodiment of a spiritual principle. He says: "Land provides the substratum, the field of battle and work; man provides the soul; man is everything in the formation of that sacred thing that is called, a people. Nothing of material nature suffices for it." He then proceeds to assert that:—

"A nation is a living soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is in the past, the other is the present. One is the common possession of a rich heritage of memories; the other is the actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to preserve worthily the undivided inheritance which has been handed down. Man does not improvise. The nation, like the individual, is the outcome of a long past of efforts, and sacrifices, and devotion. Ancestor-worship is therefore, all the more legitimate; for

our ancestors have made us what we are. A heroic past, great men, glory,—I mean glory of the genuine kind,—these form the social capital, upon which a national idea may be founded. To have common glories in the past, a common will in the present; to have done great things together, to will to do the like again,—such are the essential conditions for the making of a people. We love in proportion to the sacrifices we have consented to make, to the sufferings we have endured. We love the house that we have built, and will hand down to our descendant. The Spartan hymn, "We are what you were; we shall be what you are", is in its simplicity the national anthem of every land.

"In the past an inheritance of glory and regrets to be shared, in the future a like ideal to be realised; to have suffered, and rejoiced, and hoped together; all these things are worth more than custom houses in common, and frontiers in accordance with strategical ideas; all these can be understood in spite of diversities of race and language. I said just now, 'to have suffered together' for indeed, suffering in common is a greater bond of union than joy. As regards national memories, mournings are worth more than triumphs; for they impose duties, they demand common efforts."

The various factors enumerated above only facilitate the emergence of national consciousness. They by themselves do not necessarily constitute a nation. As Professor Toynbee has pointed out, "It is impossible to argue *a priori* from the presence of one or even several of these factors to the existence of a nationality; they may have been there for ages and kindled no response and it is impossible to argue from one case to another; precisely the same group of factors may produce nationality here and there have no effect."

To my way of thought the factors enumerated above are not enough. There has to be the spark of awareness before they can be ignited and pressed into the service of the creation of a nation. That spark is supplied by Leadership. In the modern world the role of a Hero is to stress the

ideological aspect of his people's collective 'soul' life. He can achieve this best by taking his stand on those 'ideas' or ideological premises which reflect the strength and character of the soul of his people. This awareness is primarily attributable to the emergence of powerful and significant ideas in the advanced section of a given society or people. After these ideas have been expressed by their authors they appear to find a favourable response in the minds of the least advanced ones, because these ideas are, in a way, but an expression of their own sub-conscious and dormant aspirations. No social change in the direction of moral and spiritual re-generation is possible until, by a process of intensive concentration and thinking directed upon the task of exploring the unconscious deeps of mankind, deeps in which is rooted the soul-life of a people, a thinker has successfully brought within the scope of vision those powerful and significant ideas that in their turn give a new direction and vitality to what is otherwise but a dumb striving for securing the expression of the soul of a people. Ultimately therefore it is a question of self-effort and that is why the Quran emphasises the Truth: "God changes not, as to what concern any people, until they change in respect to what depends upon themselves." This transformation or rebirth, call it what you like, takes place in the sphere of Human freedom and is a movement that proceeds from the inward depths of life's consciousness. Rational thought is the only lever with which our will raises the world. We have to enable the soul of a people to assert itself, and this it proceeds to do only when it is given 'words' to express itself. This is the hidden meaning of the Biblical saying, "In the beginning was the word."

If you ask those who are engaged in the governance of the new State or in framing its constitution, what goal they have placed before themselves for the progressive realisation of which they are working day and night, you will, I am sure, not get a *consistent or satisfactory answer*. A possible reply would be that the goal of Pakistan is the goal

of Islam. In other words, the future of this nation is conceived to lie in the same plane of approach in which the future of Islam, as a religion of the human race, is said to lie. Now, although this is a true answer, in the sense in which two plus two makes four, like many truths it is so uninformative and vague that it offers no practical guidance whatever to the present day politicians or statesmen in regard to what they are called upon to *do here and now* in order that they may the better be able to realise the goal which they have in view.

It cannot be denied that religion has greatly influenced the development of national consciousness. Religion has played an enormous role as a symbol of nationality. 'The real motive behind many struggles, which are commonly regarded as religious, is the national sentiment striving for expression in a "national personality". It is religion, again, which to a large extent, imparts to a people that close solidarity which is implied in the idea of a nation and which decisively contributes to the rise of the conviction that devotion to national causes and self-sacrifice in its service are commanded by an authority higher than any human government.' What religion in general has done for the growth of the national spirit has been studied in great detail by modern anthropologists; and this is not the place to reiterate the findings at which they have arrived. Suffice it to say that in Islam, evolution of religion, reaches its final phase; and on reading the Quran one cannot but see that a Mussalman is called upon inwardly to belong, not merely to a national organisation but to, what might be termed, a "supranational synthesis" or the Brotherhood of Man. The institution of pilgrimage is a clear commentary on the truth of the foregoing assertion. And the first supernationalist in history (not merely an internationalist) is undoubtedly the Holy Prophet Muhammad. For internationalism, be it noted, the national spirit subsists as a last resort; and international law, international exchange, international concords, are

merely relationships that subsist between the two or more nations, *each of which is unwilling to surrender any part of its sovereignty*. The Holy Prophet Muhammad, as I understand him, is essentially a supranationalist in the sense that, not only has he envisaged, but he has taken steps towards the concrete realisation of, the vision of a supernational structure of a world polity where man is called upon to belong to a wider spiritual fraternity than that which is implied by loyality to the creed of Nationalism. It is the religious duty of a Muslim to see that he brings about the spiritual unity of all mankind. Although a supernationalist, Muhammad was also a nationalist in the refined sense of that term. Did he not say that love of our country, that is, being patriotic, was a part of our faith? This discussion only shows that Islam, points out the ideal, the direction in which we are called upon to strive, the goal which Humanity is called upon to reach. All the Muslim countries profess to follow Islam and yet notice the marked differences in their culture, in the structural peculiarity of their social institutions and in their economico-political set-up. This variation in the style of life of these nations was only to be expected: religion (like any other ideological influence) represents the masculine spirit of History and its inter-action with the materialistic factors would necessarily give rise to varied cultural formations.

A State like Pakistan although pledged to pursue those values which Islam came to emphasise, has still to enquire into, and determine, the precise methodological technique by which, it will be able to embody those values in History. This is the more so because Islam is not a religion of the conventional type: in a sense it is only too true to say that Islam came to kill all traditional institutions of religion. The Holy Prophet Muhammad signed the death warrant of all "revealed religion" by saying that he was the last of the prophets. The Holy Quran itself says to Prophet Muhammad "This day I have perfected your religion". Islam ushers in an era of individual realisation

of those truths which have been revealed and which up to that stage in Human History were accepted on the authority of those who were the founders of the various religions, the inspired sages and social reformers.

It must be admitted that Pakistanis cannot claim to belong to one and the same race; Western Pakistan betrays extreme diversity of racial blood in this behalf; even as a geographical concept, Western and Eastern Pakistan presents several anomalous features. The way of life of a man belonging to the Frontier is radically different from the way of life of those who belong to Sind and both of them have material differences to display when they come to be contrasted from the Punjabi or the Bengali. It is true that common religious practices remain the same, but it is questionable if religion itself is after all such a *vital influence* over the lives of people who seem to profess it. Then the interpretation of this faith differs a great deal from one sect to another, and Western and Eastern Pakistan display such a great variety of religious beliefs and practices that it would be difficult to reconcile them as having flowed from the same fountain source. It is even wrong to think that the citizens of Pakistan today have a common history or common traditions. When it is said that we have a common history and common tradition, it is generally believed that we are referring to Muslim history from which we are to draw inspiration and derive incentives for our actions. But history, before it can be a decisive influence, must be first appreciated as a part and parcel of our living present. We have to re-interprete that history in terms of modern thought before its lessons can be availed of for dealing with existing situations. It is a childish prattle to say that we can, in the past history of the Mussalmans, find a type of economic and political teaching which, without any re-interpretation in the light of present world conditions, could afford us guidance for conducting our affairs properly. The economic and political structure of the Past has nothing in common with the situation which

obtains in the contemporary world. The economic forces of our age are definitely of a different order from those which subsisted at the time of which we are speaking. The growth of international trade, of banking, or exchange, of international credit, of tariff reforms—all these are products of the last 200 years of social evolution and have been called into play as a result of the mastery which man has acquired over the forces of nature and the extent to which he has been able to annihilate space and time. The days of isolation, of localised cultures and civilisations are days of the past. No nation today can afford to live and grow in a splendid isolation. The economic policy pursued by major Powers of the world today affects the economic policy of rest of the world. Major political events happening in the United States of America or Great Britain have tremendous repercussions on the formulation of political or economic policies in different sectors of the world.

The impulse that animates Muslim history was released by the personality of the Holy Prophet and the example of his holy and heroic life which he provided to his followers, and who, for their part, transmitted the tradition, (without rationally comprehending it) to the generations that succeeded them. With the passage of time a period of decay and demoralisation set in, only because the Muslims did not keep truly to, the creed of the Holy Quran. They ceased practising the religion of "reading, writing and thinking". It would, therefore, require a whole sale reinterpretation of the whole phase of Muslim history before any vital principle is discovered in the forest of its facts. As it is, the investigation of facts in the field of Muslim history has not even begun. History, as an instrument of inductive enquiry, has not even been contemplated seriously by Modern Muslim scholars. Ibn Khaldoon was the first and undoubtedly he has been the last to have emphasised this aspect of Human History. A considerable bulk of what is loosely described as Muslim History is really History of the Arabs. I do not admit that the Arabs

understood Islam to any remarkable extent, although such measure of progress as has been recorded on the pages of their History is, no doubt, due to their having been influenced, but that too only superficially, by the life and Teaching of the Holy Prophet. Muhammad's mission is yet to be fulfilled. Muslim History has yet to be made. . .

It is for this reason that it has been said that the only lessons that we can learn from History is that we cannot learn anything from History. This is so because to each historical phase belongs a new type of adjustment which can only be secured by the free spirit of man aided by his critical thinking. There is no other guidance that can come to the rescue of man except his own thinking. No helper or *Messiah* will ever avail. What is decisive in the world today is clarity of thought and perception. Man must learn to think coherently and act heroically before he can be saved.

All these observations make it imperative for us to work out a consistent ideology on the basis of which the economic and political policies of the New State can be shaped. The Holy Quran, the life of the Holy Prophet, and his sayings, will of course be regarded as fountain sources from which we shall draw our inspiration and guidance. But unless we understand the historical forces underlying the contemporary world order, we shall never be able to fruitfully apply those principles which are to be found in the Holy Quran. Our so-called religious Leaders who have lulled themselves into a sense of false security on these issues would do well to ponder over the fate that has overtaken some of the Muslim countries *that did not know how to adjust themselves to the modern world in accordance with the principles of the Holy Quran.*

I am quoting here below the observations of Frederick Hertz, one of the well known sociologists of our time, to show the extent to which the role of Islam is not only minimised, but actually been proved to have obstructed all progress :—

"The Young Turk Movement which overthrew despotism in 1908 aimed at the fusion of all the nationalities in a common Ottoman Nation, with Turkish as the language of communication. The Young Turks abandoned the idea of basing the Empire on Islam: they were hostile to the hierarchy of clerical lawyers and promised freedom and equality to all religions and nationalities. Yet they also tried to foster Turkish patriotism by an appeal to Turkish *racial* pride. For this purpose they encouraged Pan-Turanianism, cultivating the memory of the alleged Mongolian ancestors of the Turks and the idea of solidarity and national unity of all peoples of Turanian stock, which implied the liberation of millions of people living in the Russian Empire. A movement set in for purifying the Turkish language from Persian and Arabic words, and for adopting words and names derived from Turanian roots. The Turanian 'idea, however, was incompatible with that of an Ottoman Nation, based on equality of all races, and, in particular Young Turk policy led to the growth of estrangement between Turks and Arabs. "The efforts to save the Empire were thwarted by wars which ended in its ruin. After the World War the Ottoman Empire was dismembered, and the peace terms of the Allies even menaced the integrity of Turkish territory and the whole national future of the Turks, General Mustapha Kemal Pasha organised victorious resistance to these claims, seized power, and then set out to create a national State on entirely new foundation.

"This policy began with the ethnic unification of the State by expulsion of all elements considered as alien, and by the reception of kindred immigrants expelled from the Balkans. It is significant, however, that the criterion of what was alien and kindred was still religion. Turkey expelled the Christians, even if speaking Turkish only, and the Balkan nations expelled the Moslems, even if speaking Slavic or Greek only. Soon, however, the Turkish reformers more and more discarded religious institutions

and traditions from political life. The millets disappeared as also the Capitulations the people was declared Sovereign, the self-determination of the Arabs was recognized, and Ankara became the capital instead of Constantinople. The Caliphate, which implied the duty of defending Islam and which still appealed to the feelings of millions of Moslems outside Turkey, especially in India, was abolished. In the mosques Turkish replaced the sacred Arabic Language, the Holy Quran was translated into Turkish, and the purification and Turanization of the language was continued. Arabic script gave way to Latin script, which meant a great saving of time in the learning of the art of reading and writing. The fez, which had become a symbol of religious conservatism, was abolished and the European 'custom of wearing hats introduced.' Law was completely emancipated from religion, the Swiss civil code and other foreign Laws were adopted *en bloc*, without any discussion of single clauses. The Legal position of women was fundamentally altered by the abolition of all Laws and customs encroaching upon their equality with men. Polygamy was doomed to extinction by prohibiting any further marriage with more than one wife. The sacred custom of women wearing a veil before their face was suppressed too. Education was taken out of clerical hands and reformed according to European standards. All these and other reforms were quite incompatible with Islamic precepts and traditions. They implied the recognition that modern nationality could only grow in an atmosphere permeated by Western ideas. In this respect the Turkish, like the Chinese, national revival differed from the national movement in India.

"The connexion of modern ideas of nationality with Western civilization is also shown by the rise of Arabian national aspirations in the Ottoman Empire and after its fall. It is significant that the pioneers of the Arab national revival were chiefly *Christian Arabs, educated in missionary schools, both Catholic and Protestant.* The missionaries and

their pupils were the first who gave a modern education in Arabic, published many important books and journals, and united the warring creeds among the Arabs by a common ideal. Egypt, however, detached herself from the Arab cause a national pride was aroused by the great civilization of ancient Egypt, which was much older than Arabian civilisation."

The foregoing statement establishes *prima facie* that Turkish nationalism has progressed not because of, but in spite of, Islam. The fact remains, however, that all the progress that has been made by the Turkish nation has been in the right direction: precisely the direction in which the Holy Quran and Islam point, in the direction in which modern Europe, broadly speaking, has tended to develop. But because there has been no re-interpretation of the teachings of Islam, no proper understanding of Muslim history the result *appears* to be one which is in complete contradiction thereof.

Long before the birth of Pakistan, Allama Iqbal, in his lectures on the Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, had given an account of the forces and factors that had brought about the emergence of the Turkish National Movement, a movement about which Frederick Hertz speaks in the long extract cited by me from his *Nationality in History and Politics*. Iqbal traced the origin of the Turkish National Movement to the proper application, by the genius of the Turkish people, of that dynamic principle of movement in the structure of Islam which its jurists refer to as *Ijtehad*. Iqbal has, in those lectures, given his interpretation of the way in which the principle of *Ijtehad*, had been applied in Turkey. According to him, "Turks' *Ijtehad* is that according to the spirit of Islam the Caliphate or *Imamate* can be vested in a body of persons or an elected assembly. The religious doctors of Islam in Egypt and India so far as I know have not yet expressed themselves on this point. Personally I believe the Turkish viewpoint is perfectly sound. It is hardly necessary to argue this

point. The republican form of government is not only thoroughly consistent with the spirit of Islam, but has also become a necessity in view of the new forces that are set free in the world of Islam." After referring to Ibn Khaldoon's famous prolegomena to History and showing how that philosopher of history had himself interpreted the doctrine of Caliphate in Islam, Iqbal proceeds to give an account of the manner in which a great poet of Turkey, Zia, founds Turkish Nationalism upon the ideology of Islam. Iqbal concludes all these considerations by pointing out that the Turkish National Movement is not antithetical to Islam. He says :—

"The truth is that among the Muslim nations of today, Turkey alone has shaken off its dogmatic slumber, and attained to self-consciousness. She alone has claimed her right of intellectual freedom; she alone has passed from the ideal to the real—a transition which entails keen intellectual and moral struggle. To her the growing complexities of a mobile and broadening life are sure to bring new situations suggesting new points of view, and necessitating fresh interpretations of principles which are only of an academic interest to a people who have never experienced the joy of spiritual expansion. It is, I think, the English thinker Hobbes who makes this acute observation that to have a succession of identical thoughts and feelings is to have no thoughts and feelings at all. Such is the lot of most Muslim countries today. They are mechanically repeating old values, whereas the Turk is on the way to creating new values. He has passed through great experiences which have revealed his deeper self to him. In him life has begun to move, change, and amplify, giving birth to new desires, bringing new difficulties and suggesting new interpretations. The question which confronts him today, and which is likely to confront other Muslim countries in the near future is whether the Law of Islam is capable of evolution—a question which will require great intellectual effort, and is sure to be answered in the affirmative; provided the world

of Islam approaches it in the spirit of Omar—the first critical and independent mind in Islam who, at the last moments of the Prophet, had the moral courage to utter these remarkable words: 'The Book of God is sufficient for us."

"We heartily welcome the liberal movement in modern Islam; but it must also be admitted that the appearance of liberal ideas in Islam constitutes also the most critical moment in the history of Islam. Liberalism has a tendency to act as a force of disintegration, and the race-idea which appears to be working in modern Islam with greater force than ever may ultimately wipe off the broad human outlook which Muslim people have imbibed from their religion. Further, our religious and political reformers in their zeal for liberalism may overstep the proper limits of reform in the absence of a check on their youthful fervour. We are today passing through a period similar to that of the Protestant revolution in Europe, and the lesson which the rise and outcome of Luther's movement teaches should not be lost on us. A careful reading of history shows that the Reformation was essentially a political movement, and the net result of it in Europe was a gradual displacement of the universal ethics of Christianity by systems of national ethics. The result of this tendency we have seen with our own eyes in the Great European War which, far from bringing any workable synthesis of the two opposing systems of ethics, has made the European situation still more intolerable. It is the duty of the leaders of the world of Islam today to understand the real meaning of what has happened in Europe, and then to move forward with self-control and a clear insight into the ultimate aims of Islam as a social polity."

These are the words of a man who has been rightly regarded as the first man who expressed the ideology of Pakistan; and it would be worthwhile for any serious student to go to his lectures over and over again to see for himself the elastic and catholic Spirit of Islam and its capacity to yield to the modern world an ideological basis

for the establishment of a sort of society which would be free from those international discords and tensions that infest its peace and stability today.

Some European writers, scholars of repute, impartial students of Islam, have paid to Islam the tribute that it is the most rational of all religions; and observation shows that its teachings have been, as a matter of course, accepted by the entire world. But, before this claim of Islam can be appreciated properly, it is necessary to discover from the Holy Quran itself what are the articles of its faith and what is the philosophy of life and action it has propounded. All this requires a new outlook on Islam, an outlook that can only come by a study of modern science, and philosophy. If the Holy Quran is to be regarded as "*Um-ul-Kitab*" that is the 'Mother of Books' it is necessary to show how its teachings are in conformity with the findings of modern knowledge. In Pakistan, as yet, beyond the raising of mere slogans, I have not found any precise statement of the principles of Islam as applied to our daily conduct or the governance of our State, a statement in terms whereof we are to shape our individual and social life and make Pakistan a progressive nation in the modern world. That task yet remains to be done and not until that is done can there be Muslim Renaissance or flowering of our national character. . .

Having considered the operation of the religious factor as a contributory force in the formation of national character of the citizens of the New State, I wish to refer, in passing, to the influence of language, literature and the arts in this behalf. The language, literature and arts exercise great influence in the formation of national character, although, in a sense, they themselves are the manifestations of that national character itself. They act and react on one another. The controversy with regard to the common language for Pakistan is still unresolved in so for as Urdu in the West, and Bengali in East Pakistan, continue to vie with each other for recognition as the official state

language of Pakistan. Literature in Pakistan is merely the product of influences which are unconnected with Pakistan, in the sense that they are, regarded historically, older than the Pakistan-idea itself. Sanskrit, Hindi, Arabic, Persian appear to have moulded the intellectual thought-currents as even the poetry of a purely lyrical type in India. Now, literature as has been rightly said, has two aspects: it represents, in the first place, the mere *moral force* that enlivens and shapes the individual character of the reader and thus helps him to make his contribution to the moulding of national character: and, on the other hand, literature is a purely expressional medium that reflects the individuality of the writer more than anything else and, in this sense, its influence and its motives are different from literature conceived as a moral force. The intellectual content of literature as it obtains in science and philosophy or in the development of reflective thought, must be distinguished from its artistic elegance, or, what is the same thing, from the mere aesthetic content thereof. So far as the contemporary literature of Pakistan is concerned, it is absolutely barren: regarded from the intellectual standpoint, no original works in science or in Philosophy, are to be seen anywhere in Pakistan. What, however, one does come across is a mere attempt at getting an aesthetic expression for ideas that are already available to us, in other national literatures of the world. There is no originality of any kind which may be regarded as a distinctive feature of our literature. Poetry in Pakistan, if I may claim to be a judge of it, is merely lyrical and continues to exploit the usual apparatus of poet's fancies, age old metaphors and similies, as also the once vital, but now hackneyed, symbolism with which readers of oriental poetry are so familiar. It does not by any means reflect the spirit of our times.

It may be urged that we have had only a very short period at our disposal as a nation to make any progress in redefining the value of art and literature in Pakistan. What is, however, of moment is that there is no *awareness* of

the fact that with this type of literature, it is not possible to evolve that unique and distinctive cultural flavour of art and literature which could be regarded as typical of Pakistan. There is not even the consciousness on the part of our scholars, thinkers and poets that any effort in this direction is at all necessary: and, so long as no conscious endeavour in this behalf is made, we will continue to remain what we are. A nation that does not progress, decays—there is nothing static in history...

It must not be forgotten that national character has a metaphysical reality of its own. Persons who go on pilgrimage to holy shrines become aware of a peculiar psychic atmosphere pervading these holy places, an atmosphere which is felt by them directly. And, while they are at these holy places they themselves get imbued with the psychic spirit of those places and, to that extent, they themselves get transformed. This experience is a living and vital phenomenon and works as a great and transforming influence on the mind of a devotee. National character also has a similar influence over the lives of the individuals who belong to a given nation, and it can be felt by visitors having requisite sensibility in countries like Germany, France and England. They become aware of the soul-life of those nations, of a sort of life which has grown over these countries and which can be felt and lived directly, not merely inferentially. Now what is it that goes into the making of this type of psychic atmosphere? A thousand thoughts and sentiments, as constitutive elements, have gone into the making of that atmosphere. National character is built by common traditions, common hopes, common aspirations, common pursuits, common thoughts and common action. Poets, philosophers, musicians—all these voice that which is in accordance with the style of a given nation. If Pakistan is to live in history, it can only *live* in that sense.

The royal road that will lead us towards the goal of making Pakistan as an entity endowed with unique cultural and national characteristics is no other than that of being

able to impart a sound national education to the coming generation.

I have already stated that the destiny of a nation is not anything which is fixed or unalterable but that it is always the result of human effort. And human effort, in the context of the ideas we have been considering, is no other than the effort at educating the younger generation. Education is the means of promoting and preserving the life of a nation. On the one hand, education serves as a means of transmitting to the generations that are to come the accumulated wisdom of the ages, and, on the other hand, it is itself an instrument with the help of which an individual is helped effectively to contribute his share to the collective wisdom of the age which he inherits. A new nation can hope to live without armies, but it cannot possibly do without that class of workers known as teachers and educationists.

Character building can thus be achieved through education. And the character of the individual reflects itself in the character of the nation. In the modern world where education has become a decisive force, all wars are really wars of ideas and the only differences are really ideological differences. The battle fields of the coming generation will be the schools and the colleges. And what is the ideal of education? Here is what my friend Dr. Robert Briffault has to say on the matter:—

"It is reasonable and right that every man should with all available knowledge and training be fitted for the particular work he is intended to perform; but that is not the first object of education. It is not the proper sense of education at all. The carpenter should be trained in carpentering, the doctor in medical science, the farmer in agriculture. But a man besides being a carpenter, a doctor, or a farmer, is first and foremost a man. In addition to carpentering, or doctoring, or farming, in addition to having to deal with the problems of materials and constructions, or of pathology, or of the chemistry of soils, he is

confronted with the problems of life, with the problems of the living world. In addition to being a working member in the division of the world's labour, he is a living mind. He is the heir of all the ages, of the complex organism of humanity through which the evolutionary process is moving; he has a right to his human inheritance, to the development of his powers to the full extent which that inheritance make possible. He is the builder of the future and contributes as a citizen of humanity in his measure to its growth. Education is the imparting to every being of the means and methods of rational thought."

Little wonder that our Prophet's prayer to his dying day was, 'O God increase me in my knowledge.' Little wonder that he enjoined the persuit of knowledge as a duty on the moslem-man as well as the woman. Little wonder that he admonished, "Acquire knowledge even though it be available for you in China."

1948:
[From an Address to Students]

APPENDIX

FIRST AND LAST AID TO CRITICS

(1)

Before the professional critic proceeds to 'let himself go' in order to have his say on the *faults*, *flaws* and *foibles* of the mind that has minted the present book, it is necessary that he should be reminded of what Emerson says about the value of books in general. "Books are" he says, "the best things, well used; abused, amongst the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire. I had better never see a book, than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my orbit and made a satellite instead of a system". And he says further, "Books are for the scholar's idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted on other men's transcripts of their readings. But when the intervals of darkness come, as come they must, when the sun is hid and the stars withdraw their shining—we repair to the lamps which are kindled by their ray, to guide our steps to the east again, where the dawn is. We hear that we may speak. The Arabain proverb says, 'A fig tree, looking on a fig tree, becomes fruitful." The critic might as well condescend, for a change, to judge of the present book from the perspective outlined above: the words of Emerson, one of the wisest of men the world has known, I hope, will have some meaning for him and will operate as 'brakes' on his unbriddled enthusiasm for 'having his say'. After all, as I have mentioned in the Preface, I lay no claim to being original, much less to being that infallible oracle who must be listened to and obeyed at all costs. The book does not claim to prove anything: as its title suggests, it is merely the creative expression of a 'self'—and a humble self, at that—no more and no less.

When children are made to play the part, let us say, of 'Othello' or 'Hamlet', we do not expect them to reveal a complete understanding of the solemn truths that lie locked-up in the words that Shakespeare wrote: we are contented, kindly and compassionately, to watch the play just "for what it is worth", and endeavour to derive such joy as might be available for us. I too seem to myself as having *acted*, all through my life, the part that has been assigned to me in this mysterious play we call 'life'—and all I impress upon the learned critic is not to be oblivious of the fact that the role I have been drawn into playing was not of my making. Let him have before him, whenever he is engaged in reading this book, the image of a child at play...Of course, behind each sentence is a sigh, ever so suggestive of the incapacity of its author to express himself. Only he for whom that sigh means something and

who can think compassionarely of the impulse that has animated my utterances, will be in a mood to forgive the "noise", which the mere words in my book, in the total absence of that sympathetic understanding on the part of the critic, are likely to make.

In short, only he who can love the mere Human and can put up with a mind that claims to articulate and publish the truth as it sees it—, not *in spite* of but *because* of, its "faults, flaws and foibles"—is qualified to become a critic. Of such a class of critics, of course, no one need complain. It is their vocation to help us on; they inspire us to make a renewed effort to play all the better the part that has been assigned to us in the scheme of things. These high souled servants of God know that some of us are the 'hammers', others the 'anvils' and yet some others the 'red-hot iron bars' that have to be hammered into shape: they know that we cannot *choose* our part—all we can do is to play our part manfully and cheerfully after we have ourselves *discovered* what that part is...And they, therefore, judge all human effort, kindly and compassionality..

(2)

The only other aid that I can give to the 'critic' is to refer him to the books that have influenced me. Many of the quotations appearing in this book have been culled from the books that are listed below.

1. Count Hermann Keyserling: Immortality; Travell Diary of a Philosopher; Creative Understanding; Recovery of Truth; South American meditations.
2. Dr. Robert Briffault: Making of Humanity; Mothers; Psyche's Lamp.
3. P.D. Ouspensky: Tertium Organum; A new model of the Universe; In search of the miraculous; Psychology of Man's possible Evolution.
4. William James: Varieties of Religions Experience; Principles of Psychology; Pragmatism; A pluralistic Universe.
5. A. Seth Pringle-Pattison. Idea of God in the light of Recent Philosophy; Balfour Lectures on Realism.
6. Walter Lippmann—Preface to Morals: Preface to Politics; Public opinion; Good Society.
7. Plato. All his Dialogues. (Tr. by Jowett.) Particularly: Republic; Phaedo; Crito; Meno. Phaedrus. Parmenedies.
8. Kant. Critique of Pure Reason; Critique of Practical Reason; Critique of Judgment; Fundamental Principles of the metaphysics of morals.
9. Tolstoy. War & Peace; Meaning of Art; Confessions and what I believe; Short stories (23 Tales). On Life and Essays on Religion Tr. by (W. Aylmer Maude).

10. Ruskin. Sesame & Lilies: Unto this last; Stones of Venice.
11. Carlyle. All his books: more particularly Past & Present; SARTOR RESARTUS; Heroes & Hero-Worship; Life of Stirling and Life of Schiller; Life of Frederick, the Great; French Revolution. All His essays & addresses—particularly the one entitled "Characterstics".
12. Goethe. Egmont; Faust; Elective affinities; Truth & Poetry out of my Life: (Autobiography) Italian Travells; Sorrows of Young Werther; Welhelm Miester (Tr. by Carlyle). Goethe's Conversations with Eckermann (by Eckermann: Every man's library edition).
13. H. A. L. Fisher. A History of Europe; Napoleon.
14. T. H. Buckle : History of Civilization in England.
15. Spengler. The Decline of West.
16. Toynbee. A study of History. 10 vols: (Student Edition by D. C. Somervell-gives Summary of first 6 vols only). Civilization on Trial
17. Nicholas Berdyaev. Meaning of History; Spirit and Reality. Towards a new Epoch.
18. R. G. Colling Wood. Idea of History; Autobiography.
19. Ibn-Khildun. Prolegomena to the Philosophy of History.
20. H. C. Chamberlain. Foundations of 19th Century; Kant.
21. Frank Thilly. History of Philosophy.
22. A. K. Rogers. A student's History of Philosophy.
23. B. Russell. History of Western Philosophy—Selected papers of Mr. B. Russell (Modern Library Ed.).
24. G. H. Lewis. History of Philosophy. Life of Goethe (Every man's Ed.).
25. Jean-Paul Sartre. Existentialism & Humanism; What is Literature; Psychology of Imagination; Iron in the Soul.

Other Books on Existentialism :

(*a*) Six. Existentialist Thinkers—H. J. Blackham.
(*b*) Encounter with nothingness—Helmust Kuhn.
(*c*) Dreadful Freedom—Marjorie Greene.
(*d*) Existentialism, Marxism & Anarchisim—Herbert Read.

26. Miguel De-UnaMumo. The Tragic Sense of life.
27. Jose Ortega Gasset. The Revolt of the masses.
28. Lecompte du Nouy. Human Destiny.
29. George Bernard Shaw. Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism & Capitalism; All his Plays.
30. C. E. M. Joad. Guide to Philosophy; Guide to the Philosophy of Politics & Morals; Bernard Shaw.
31. Frederick L. Schuman; International Politics. Commonwealth of Man.

32. Rabindranath Tagore—Gitanjali; Religion of Man; Sadhna; Personality.
33. Sir James Jeans. Mysterious Universe: The Universe around us. Physics & Philosophy.
34. Sir Arthur Edington. Nature of the Physical World; Expanding Universe; Space, Time and Gravitation.
35. Bergson. Creative Evolution; Time and Freewill; Introduction to Metaphysics; Two Sources of Morality & Religion.
36. Dr. James Martineau. A Study of Religion.
37. C. G. Jung. Modern Man in search of Soul. Essays on Analytic Psychology. Psychology of the unconscious.
38. Sayed Amirali. Spirit of Islam.
39. Jalaluddin Rumi. Diwan-e-Shams-Tabriz; Masnavi.
40. A. N. Whitehead. Science & the modern world; Adventure of Ideas; Process and Reality; Concept of Nature; Aims of Education.
41. C. D. Broad. Mind and its place in Nature.
42. Lloyed Morgan. Emergent Evolution.
43. S. Alexander. Space, Time & Deity.
44. Earnest Barkar. National Character; Reflections on Government; Principles of Social and Political Theory.
45. Will Durant. Story of Philosophy; Story of Civilization.
46. Romain Rolland: Jean Christophe; Life of Tolstoy; Life of Ramakrishna.
47. Emerson. All his "Essays" and Representative men.
48. Bennedetto Croce. History as the Story of Liberty.
59. H. T. Sorley. Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit.
60. Aldous Huxley—Time must have a stop; Ends & means; Texts & Pretexts; Ape and the Essence; Those Barren Leaves.
61. R. B. Perry: Present Philosophical Tendencies; General Theory of Value.
62. Friedrich Von Schiller: Aesthetic Education of Man.
63. Iqbal: Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam.
64. Antoine de Saint Exupery—Wind, Sand and Stars.

EXTRACTS FROM OPINIONS

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"[illegible]" [illegible]

"[illegible]" —Pakistan Quarterly.

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—Muslimuddin Siddiqi.

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Altogether Mr. Brohi's book is highly instructive and useful, the product of a vigorous intellect. We recommend it to all seekers after truth who are thinking over the problems of life and their own country.

—Mazharuddin Siddiqi.